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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS,

AND

A TRAGEDY.

By Mrs. WEST.

Thus ſang the uncouth Swain to th' Oaks and Rills,
While the ſtill Morn went out with Sandals grey,
He touch'd the tender Stops of various Quills,
With eager Thought warbling his Dorick Lay.

MILTON'S LYCIDAS.

YORK:

PRINTED BY W. BLANCHARD; AND SOLD BY R. FAULDER, LONDON; T. BURNHAM, NORTHAMPTON; W. HARROD, HARBOROUGH; AND N. COLLIS, KETTERING. MDCCXCI.

1. Poetry, English
2. Drama, English

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MRS. WEST, *at the ſame time that ſhe returns her beſt thanks to her friends, begs leave to apologize to thoſe who favoured her with their names at the commencement of the* WORK, *for the length of time that has elapſed ſince they did her that honour. The delay originated from cauſes ſhe could neither foreſee nor obviate, and it was the more vexatious to her, as it ſeemed to imply a want of what ſhe ſtrongly felt— reſpectful attention to her ſubſcribers in particular, and to the public in general.*

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DEDICATION.

To the Counteſs HARCOURT, *&c. &c.*

Madam,

INSTEAD of indulging myſelf in expatiating on the merits of your Ladyſhip's character, permit me to avail myſelf of thoſe virtues, and that refined taſte, which are univerſally acknowledged. In making it publicly known that the efforts of my humble Muſe have been honoured with your Ladyſhip's approbation, I ſhall not fear to offer to the world thoſe Poems which I am permitted to inſcribe to Lady Harcourt; and, anticipating their ſucceſs in conſequence of this high honour, I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Madam, your Ladyſhip's
moſt grateful and devoted
humble ſervant,
JANE WEST.

PREFACE.

THE Author of the following POEMS does not affect a ſtoical indifference to their reception from the world: on the contrary ſhe acknowledges all the perplexity and alarm that an anxious deſire of ſucceſs can inſpire. Such apprehenſions prompt her in a few introductory periods to beſpeak the favour of her readers. The trite excuſe, that the advice of ſome reſpectable friends encouraged her to the preſent publication, might with truth be alledged. In extenuation of the numerous defects which ſhe fears may be diſcovered, ſhe could plead the diſadvantages of a confined education, and the little leiſure the indiſpenſible duties of domeſtic life allow for literary purſuits; but conſcious that no apologies can reſcue from

oblivion the jejune productions which vanity or officious friendſhip attempts to intrude upon a generous but diſcerning public, ſhe waves all futile pretences, and only intreats that her Poems may be read with indulgence, and judged with candour. From ſuch a deciſion ſhe wiſhes not to appeal.

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POEMS.

ODE I.

ECCLESIASTES, chapter 1, verſe 2.

"Vanity of Vanities, ſaith the preacher, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity."

I.

AND thus doth Jury's ſapient King,
Who full felicity enjoy'd,
The dirge of diſappointment ſing,
And deeply mourn the total void?
With feſtal roſes ſee him crown'd;
The nymphs of Sion, gather'd round,
Expect delight, and love the theme.
He modulates the harp's ſoft flow
To numbers of expreſſive woe,
And proves our deareſt joys are but a ſhadowy dream.

II.

Yet haply, in that diſtant time,
Long ere the dawn of poliſh'd taſte,
The pageant feaſts of Judah's clime
Refin'd enjoyment never grac'd.
Though commerce, at a king's command,
Search'd Tyre and Ophir's diſtant land
To find the exquiſite and rare;
Yet if conſtraint, a ſilent gueſt,
Intruded on the regal feaſt,
Pleaſure would inſtant fly the oſtentatious glare.

III.

Thee, Attica, a name endear'd
By grateful learning to mankind:
In thee voluptuouſneſs appear'd
With elegance and ſcience join'd
Beneath the citron's loaded bough,
The zephyrs' told Anacreon's vow
In whiſpers to the God of wine:
Menander wooed the Idalian boy:
And the philoſopher of joy*
Evinc'd, by reaſons ſage, that pleaſure is divine.

* Epicurus.

IV.

Did not the joys of wine and love,
The luxury of letter'd eaſe,
The bath, the banquet, and the grove,
Form'd ev'n to extaſy to pleaſe,
With full delight poſſeſs the ſoul?
Ah! no; ſatiety oft ſtole
On the gay revel's lenghten'd hours;
The Mind perceiv'd an aching void,
And, ſenſual pleaſures unenjoy'd,
Sigh'd for a nobler bliſs adapted to her powers.

V.

Did martial Rome, whoſe genius high
Graſp'd at unlimited controul,
With ſtately pageantry ſupply
This good, proportion'd to the ſoul?
Ah! hear the mighty dead avow,
That with the laurels on their brow,
Envy, and anxious care enwreath'd.
Let Africanus, doom'd to ſhame;
Let Fabius, great, but ſlander'd name;
Let murder'd Cæſar tell, what conqu'rors oft atchiev'd.

VI.

Not in the public walks of men
Can we poſſeſs our full deſires:
Behold! to ſome ſequeſter'd glen
Defeated Enterprize retires.
There Solitude, and quiet reſt,
Shall drive Ambition from his breaſt;
Would it could drive remembrance too?
But all the wrongs of baſe mankind,
Engraven on the feeling mind,
Shall o'er his ſoul diffuſe Miſanthropy's ſad hue.

VII.

Yon cottage ſee. The mantling vine
O'er the white wall redundant ſtrays:
Content! this reſidence is thine;
The roſy tenants chaunt thy praiſe.
Ah no! the honeſt ruſtick's joys,
Fatigue, and penury deſtroys,
He muſt the curſe of Adam bear:
Though temperance ſhall his board controul,
Though moderation curb his ſoul,
The numerous wants of life ſhall waken conſtant care.

VIII.

Now let the Social Duties tell
Their pleaſures. Firſt, be Friendſhip heard.
Friendſhip! thy title is a ſpell
E'en to idolatry rever'd:
Sweet is the intercourſe of mind,
When virtuous ſouls, alike refin'd,
One taſte, one ſentiment expreſs;
Welcome is ſympathy's warm glow
To the lone breaſt of frigid woe;
Welcome is counſel too to thoſe whom doubts oppreſs.

IX.

Oh Friendſhip! thy enchanting ſtrains
Have charm'd my raviſh'd ſoul ſo long,
Fain would I baniſh all thy pains
Both from my mem'ry and my ſong.
So would thy ever during ſmile
My future taſk of life beguile.
Oh! let not time or mis'ry tire,
Let not reſerv'd neglect appear,
The cauſeleſs, yet diſtracting fear,
The gloom of jealous doubt, or anger's ſudden fire.

X.

It cannot be. The crime of Eve
With imperfection marks mankind.
Errors ſhall pain, and ſorrows grieve,
And Friendſhip's ſtricteſt cord unbind.
The mother, who with high wrought joy,
Strains to her breaſt the wanton boy,
" Hope of her age, pride of her youth,"
May, when a few ſhort years are o'er,
In bittereſt agony deplore
" Filial ingratitude, worſe than the ſerpent's tooth."

XI.

The youth, whom admiration draws
To ſacrifice at Beauty's ſhrine,
'Till, mad'ned with his own applauſe,
He deems the mortal nymph divine,
How does he time, and fate upbraid,
'Till wedded to th' all perfect maid.
But then the fond illuſion flies:
Fancy to ſolid thought will yield,
And many a fault till then conceal'd
Burſt from the miſt of love on pain'd diſcernment's eyes.

XII.

Why ſhould the muſe the theme prolong
The miſeries of guilt to tell?
In the abodes of ſhame and wrong
Can the light Sylphid pleaſure dwell?
Can opulence, by meanneſs ſway'd,
Can power, that honour has betray'd,
Can raſh unſatisfied deſire,
The ſtate of ſolitary pride,
The bowl to madneſs near ally'd,
Oh happineſs! can theſe to thy rich prize aſpire?

XIII.

Hear Prudence: "Ceaſe, the ſearch is vain,
"Fate will your wiſhes ſtill prevent;
"Yet treat not Prudence with diſdain,
"And ſhe ſhall lead you to Content.
"Tho' 'tis not mine with tranſport high
"Each raviſh'd ſenſe to gratify;
"Secure tranquillity I give.
"Where the ſtill waters ſoftly flow,
"Diſtant alike from bliſs and woe,
"There ſhall the happy few, who own my guidance, live."

XIV.

Yet Prudence! e'en thy humble plea
Sedate experience diſallows.
Canſt thou from ſickneſs ſet us free,
Nor ſuffer age to load our brows?
See awful Death! his arrows ſtrike
The wary and the raſh alike:
Canſt thou againſt his power contend?
He with anticipated ſhroud
Veils all the joys to man allow'd,
And in the grave's dark gloom bids all our proſpects end.

XV.

And are a few uncertain years,
Of doubtful bliſs, of deep diſtreſs,
Of bleſſings, circumſcrib'd by fears,
The ſum of human happineſs?
The heav'n-born ſoul, is it endu'd
With ſuch inſatiate thirſt for good,
And muſt it ne'er deſire aſſuage?
Muſt diſappointment, toil, and pain,
O'er this terreſtrial planet reign,
Till death and ſilence clear the buſy crowded ſtage?

XVI.

Toil! drop thy ineffectual arm;
Exertion! thy vain zeal controul;
Let apathy the paſſions charm,
And melancholy lull the ſoul.
The race to ſpeed does not belong,
The battle does not grace the ſtrong,
Nor yet is honour wiſdom's meed.
Oh Vanity! thus let me ſing,
With Salem's well experienc'd King,
Oh earth! thy beſt delights are Vanity indeed.

ODE II.

PSALM viii.—v. 4.

"What is man that thou art mindful of him?

I.

WHY ſhould the melancholy Muſe
Repreſs the ardour of the ſoul,
And o'er young Hope's enchanting views,
Devolve affliction's ſable ſtole?
While fancy's groves inviting ſpread,
Shall ſhe the vale of mourning tread?
Diſeaſe and guilt inhabit there.
Will ſhe the cup of bleſſing ſpurn
To drink at ſorrow's bitter urn,
Which ſtands, with cypreſs crown'd, in thy dark courts, Deſpair?

II.

Has he, th' unalterable Mind,
Whoſe high beheſts we muſt obey,
Call'd us to being, yet aſſign'd
That being to diſtreſs a prey?
In heav'n's wide court, by angels trod,
In honour of th' all bounteous God,
Are endleſs hallelujahs ſung:
And when of chaos, rude and drear,
He form'd this planetary ſphere,
With hymns of praiſe and joy the Empyrean rung.

III.

Lo! the great Maker's eye divine
At once the wide creation view'd;
It all fulfill'd his vaſt deſign;
He ſaw, and he pronounc'd it good.
Crude ſhapeleſs matter, by him wrought,
Aſſum'd his radiant form, and thought,
And man aroſe with life endu'd.
To him the new-born earth was given,
Nor did the golden gates of heav'n,
From his enraptur'd view, the eternal world exclude.

IV.

But when the proud apoſtate dar'd
The goodly region to invade;
When man, by artful wiles enſnar'd,
Proudly aſpir'd and diſobey'd,—
Aloft He rear'd his flaming creſt,
And thus his helliſh bands addreſs'd:
"'Tis done: The work of ruin's done.
"No more the choral ſons of morn
"Shall hail yon planets newly born,
"Nor tell of favour'd man, creation's youngeſt ſon.

V.

"Incens'd the ſtern Jehovah ſees
"His views defeated by my guile.
"Death ſhall the guilty beings ſeize.
"Deſtruction ſinks that ſtarry pile."—
But as he gaz'd, in vain deſire,
To ſee earth's funeral blaze aſpire,
Behold the work of mercy ſhines.
Her plea, eternal Juſtice hears,
Abates our contrite parents tears;
And to repentant man a Saviour God aſſigns.

VI.

What tho' the earth, now ſterile grown,
Will but by toil her products bring;
What tho' her climes no longer own
An Eden's ever-during ſpring:
Uſe ſhall the native reconcile
To each adverſity of ſoil,
Or art allay the wild extreme.
Neceſſity ſhall ſummon forth
The ſoul of energetic worth;
And labour nerve the frame, and clear the mental beam.

VII.

Revolving years, eventful all,
Progreſſively their round fulfill.
Kingdoms and heroes riſe and fall
Obedient to th' eternal will.
Aſſyria's Kings their empire ſpread;
O'er vanquiſh'd realms the Perſians tread;
Heroick palms the Grecians bear;
The Cæſars war. Each ſeeks alone
To rear their periſhable throne;
Yet theſe thy promis'd reign, oh Prince of Peace! prepare.

VIII.

Far, far beyond the narrow bound
The Babyloniſh tyrant trod,
When from his palace, turrêt-crown'd,
He gaz'd, himſelf a fancied God;
O'er ampler realms than Cyrus ſway'd,
More numerous hoſts than Xerxes led,
Chriſtianity's mild banners wave:
Where never march'd * Achaia's Prince,
Where never Rome, on falſe pretence,
Invaded peaceful realms, or triumph'd o'er the brave.

IX.

Has not the ſacred page foretold
(That page, which med'cines all our fears)
That 'ere the car of time has roll'd
Its period o'er allotted years,
Nations, perchance, ev'n now unknown,
The inmates of each diſtant zone,
The goſpel's bleſſing ſhall receive:
From ev'ry kindred, people, tongue,
Shall burſt devotion's ardent ſong,
And earth again to Heav'n a welcome incenſe breathe.

* Alexander.

X.

'Tis not that lightnings rend the air,
Or icy rigours chain the ſoil,
Nor that humanity muſt bear
His deſtin'd lot of pain and toil,
That man complains. A different ſource
Thoſe ſorrows know, whoſe poignant force
Deepeſt afflict the tortur'd ſoul.
They ſpring from av'rice, envy, luſt,
From cruel foes, from friends unjuſt,
The pang of wounded pride, or pleaſure's traiterous bowl.

XI.

Turn then, ye erring Pilgrims! turn,
Who perfect bliſs on earth purſue:
Her ſteps ye never ſhall diſcern;
To Heav'n the radiant Cherub flew,
When Adam fell. Go ſeek her there
By humble virtue, ardent prayer,
And Charity's directing light.
Not unregarded ſhall ye ſigh:
Faith wafts your wiſhes to the ſky,
And years of endleſs joy ſhall your deſires requite.

XII.

No more of partial evil tell,
Suppreſs the falſe repining lay:
Will not Eternity diſpell
The ſorrows of life's little day?
Ev'n Death, the laſt reſiſting foe,
To Her reſigns his ebon bow,
And nerveleſs drops his murd'rous hand.
The Chriſtian, by her name impell'd,
Fenc'd by devotion's ſacred ſhield,
Dares the ſeducing world and hell's infernal band.

XIII.

Along the pilgrimage of life
To heav'n, ſubmiſſive, ſee him go.
Secure from paſſion's mental ſtrife
He feels not paſſion's reſtleſs woe.
If to his lot indulgent heav'n
A path leſs intricate has giv'n,
And ſtrew'd it with ſome caſual flowers;
Grateful he crops the bloſſoms fair,
And cultivates thoſe plants with care
Whoſe fragrance will revive in heav'n's ambroſial bowers.

XIV.

But if through deſarts, wild and rude,
With dangers fraught, his journey lies,
His mind, each rebel thought ſubdu'd,
An intellectual calm ſupplies;
While Innocence, with gentle beam,
Attracts affection and eſteem,
Still to the virtuous ſufferer given.
Such are the antidotes to woe
Theſe ſublunary ſcenes beſtow;
Such is our portion here; and our reverſion, Heaven.

INDEPENDENCE.

ODE III.

I.

SWEET Muſe, to whoſe protecting ſhrine,
Driv'n by the ſpectre Care, I flee,
When oft, at buſy days decline,
I ſigh for leiſure and for thee;
Say, in earth's habitable round,
Can perfect happineſs be found,
Proportion'd to the craving ſoul?
If ſtill beneath the ſolar road
Bright Independence makes abode,
Her's is this perfect bliſs, this joy without controul.

II.

Nymph, 'tis thy animating voice
That wakes the ſprings of latent worth;
In thee the ſavage tribes rejoice;
The poliſh'd nations of the earth
Caught, at thy ſhrine, the ſacred flame,
Which led to liberty and fame
The Grecian and the Roman arms,
When Kings, with unenlighten'd pride,
The native rights of man defied,
When rapine ſtalk'd on earth, and fill'd it with alarms.

III.

Who on the labours of the Muſe
Impaſſion'd energy beſtows?
Whoſe inſpiration can diffuſe
The warmth with which the patriot glows?
Oh, thou; the theme of many a bard,
By ſages woo'd with fond regard,
In every vein a good ſupreme!
Without thee, weak is Virtue's arm;
Feeble is Wiſdom's hope to charm;
Nor yet muſt timid Truth diſplay her radiant beam.

IV.

Thy favour'd vot'ries do not fear
The ſcorns which wealth will oft beſtow;
Nor need they hide th' indignant tear,
Stern obligation forc'd to flow.
Degrading flattery does not ſoil
The lip o'er which thy chearful ſmile
Diffuſes a becoming pride.
Nor will their hearts pretend to feel
The hurry of officious zeal,
Nor the cold civil wiſh, that hopes to be denied.

V.

Theſe ſtill with manly eaſe avow
The genuine impulſe of the ſoul;
To Nature's ſhrine alone they bow,
Obedient but to her controul.
Faſtidious taſtes, capricious laws,
The cant of cenſure and applauſe,
Claim'd by the faſhion of the day,
Their minds with noble freedom ſpurn;
For merit, and for truth they burn,
And in their ſearch employ unclouded Reaſon's ray.

VI.

Such are the characters, who prove
To what our nature can aſpire,
Who feel the dignity of love,
And friendſhip's never failing fire.
Who in each ſtate, to duty juſt,
Perform the delegated truſt,
Guided by honour's radiant ſtar.
Regardleſs tho' the vulgar blame;
Proof to the dangerous charms of fame,
Their hopes and fears revere a doom more awful far.

VII.

O Goddeſs of the brave and wiſe!
Where'er thy radiant ſeat is plac'd
Beneath mild Britain's temper'd ſkies,
Or in the cold Sarmatian waſte,
There ſtill, as in their native air,
The nobler virtues flouriſh fair.
Firm conſtancy, unwearied zeal,
Courage that ſpurns degrading fear,
Faith unprofeſſing, yet ſincere;
All that can greatly act, all that can finely feel.

VIII.

Bright object of my ardent prayer!
When will thy ſoul-enliv'ning beam
Diſpel the wintry clouds of care,
And gild the cot by Welland's ſtream?
There oft thy harbinger I ſee:
The ruddy ſylvan, Induſtry:
He ſtill directs our daily toil.
Nor yet does adverſe Fate deny
Each humbler hope to gratify,
But when, ah when will tardy Independence ſmile?

IX.

Away, Complaint! Thy chilling ſpleen
With langour numbs the active powers:
For as I view the paſſing ſcene,
My path ſeems ſtrew'd with feſtal flowers.
Millions, who bear the human form,
Aſſail'd by Fortune's ruthleſs ſtorm,
To heaven of hated life complain.
Adverſity's ſharp ſtings they feel,
They cringe beneath oppreſſion's wheel,
They pine with hopeleſs woe, or faint with cureleſs pain.

X.

Ye ſons of affluence and fame,
To noble independence born,
Remov'd from want's imputed ſhame,
And mis'ry's undeſerved ſcorn,
Preſerve the birth-right ye poſſeſs:
Oh! trifle not with happineſs;
From laviſh diſſipation fly.
Force not your noble ſouls to bear
An irkſome round of anxious care,
Nor let the ſordid bribe your mean ſubſervience buy.

XI.

Preſerve the birth-right ye poſſeſs,
The banquet of the lib'ral mind,
The pow'r to ſuccour, and to bleſs,
To ſpeed the int'reſts of mankind.
Ev'n, like the glorious orb of day,
Your ſalutary beams convey
To all within your ample ſphere.
Oppreſſive opulence ſubdue,
Lead ſlighted merit forth to view,
Diſpel the orphan's grief, and wipe the widow's tear.

XII.

Yet while with condeſcenſion ſweet
Ye lay the pride of birth aſide,
The injur'd ſufferer to meet,
The bluſh of modeſty to hide;
Still, when occaſion calls it forth,
Aſſume the dignity of worth,
To check oppreſſion's proud decree.
Admiring nations ſhall perceive,
What minds unbiaſs'd can atchieve,
And bleſs benignant heav'n, which made you great and free.

ODE IV.

For the YEAR 1789.

WRITTEN on NEW YEAR's DAY 1790.

I.

COLD, diſtant far, the Sun ſcarce ſeems
To give his ſalutary ray,
Moiſt vapours chill his ſtruggling beams,
And cloud the tranſitory day.
Soon to his glowing ſouth he flies,
And evening, deep'ning all her dyes,
Calls full orb'd Cynthia and her train:
To me yon ſtarry choir appear
To ſing the requiem of the year,
And hail the new-born babe, predeſtin'd now to reign.

II.

That new-born babe is hail'd by man,
Short ſighted man, who ſoon ſhall mourn
That of his life's allotted ſpan,
No portion ſhall again return:
Tho' time, now ſilent, ſteals away,
Rous'd by perceptible decay,
He ſhall the eagle's flight arraign,
Hang on the pinions of the year,
And beg, with agonizing fear,
The months, the days, the hours, ſo oft miſpent, in vain.

III.

But go, departed year! and join
The numerous ſynod of thy ſires;
Bid them produce their actions: Thine
A noble eulogy requires.
Hear ſome of martial exploits tell;
Others on plagues and famines dwell;
A few of gentler aſpect boaſt
Of ſeas explor'd, of truths explain'd,
Of provinces from ocean gain'd,
Of many a well-form'd ſtate, or new diſcovered coaſt.

IV.

Yet envy not the garland, Fame
Grateful around their mem'ry twines;
Go, for thyſelf the laurel claim,
Which high in Freedom's temple ſhines:
For lo! in thy auſpicious reign
The awak'ned nations heard the ſtrain
Her energetic voice impreſs'd;
When, with divine Aſtrea join'd,
The goddeſs viſited mankind,
Blew her inſpiring trump, and bade the world be bleſs'd.

V.

Before her, in effulgent light,
With dove-like aſpect Science came,
She dar'd falſe ſophiſtry to Fight,
And triumph'd in her rival's ſhame.
She firſt diſclos'd the lib'ral plan,
Which aſcertains the rights of man,
Not built on variable laws,
But at his firſt creation giv'n;
The priviledge beſtow'd by heaven,
Whence he his generous love of independence draws.

VI.

She told why rulers were aſſign'd,
And ſalutary laws ordain'd;
What fit reſtrictions theſe confin'd;
How thoſe wild anarchy reſtrain'd.
She ſpoke with extacy impell'd:
Along the banks of foaming Scheld
The peaceful Fleming, arm'd for fight,
Bade a capricious prince, with ſhame,
His inconſiſtent ſchemes diſclaim,
Nor hope the brave will yield their well atteſted right.

VII.

Sprung from a race of tyrants, ſee
The monarch of the Gallick ſhores
A captive, and his people free!
He now the policy deplores,
Which hail'd him unreſtricted Lord,
And bade him with deſpotic ſword
To ſpread proud empire's purple pall;
Regardleſs of the nobler art,
Which, while it ſubjugates the heart,
Deals with benignant hand felicity to all.

VIII.

Thy preſent aims, fair France! purſue,
With glory's palm thy brows enwreath;
No more let luxury ſubdue;
No more let levity deceive.
Will not the luſtre of thy reign
Revive the wonted worth of Spain?
She aw'd the Roman and the Moor.
Let god-like Africanus tell,
Speak ye who at Grenada fell,
If the Iberian mind ſhould ſlavery endure.

IX.

Lo! Prejudice, who vainly ſtrove,
By time, to fortify her lyes,
From all her dark receſſes drove,
Before the ſun of Freedom flies:
Bright in the Weſtern world it beams,
And ſhall the orient lack its gleams?
There did its ancient luſtre ſhine
Where ſleeps the manly Spartan ſoul;
See haughty Athens brook controul;
See enterprizing Thebes her dear-bought rights reſign.

X.

In vain luxuriant Aſia boaſts
Of Nature's gifts on her conferr'd:
Alas, along her beauteous coaſts
Are ſlavery's clanking fetters heard.
In ſilent pomp, in barb'rous ſtate,
There Deſolation ſtalks elate
O'er regions waſted by his ſpear;
The abject mind, with ſervile awe,
Submits to each new maſter's law,
And pays with cringing dread the rites of heartleſs fear.

XI.

Yet here ingenious labour reigns:
For whom poor Artiſt doſt thou toil?
Reap'ſt thou the profit of thy pains,
Is thine this richly cultur'd ſoil?
A tear ſuffuſes his meek eye,
He faints for want; I ſee him die!
My breaſt with indignation heaves.
Stern Tyranny, is this thy joy,
Seek'ſt thou to blaſt, oppreſs, deſtroy;
Are dying groans the ſounds thy idol pleas'd receives?

XII.

Oh! caſt thy eyes on Afric's ſons,
Who blacken in the ſolar beam;
Where Niger or where Gambia runs,
Reſounds the agonizing ſcream
Of ſlaves condemn'd to ceaſeleſs toil,
To periſh in a diſtant ſoil,
Far from their country, kindred, ſires.
Rous'd by reiterated groans,
Their cauſe indignant Juſtice owns,
And Man's inherent right from brother Man requires.

XIII.

Her voice let Britiſh wiſdom hear;
Let Britiſh freedom give redreſs:
Britain, whoſe name oppreſſors fear,
Whoſe aid the injur'd ever bleſs;
When mighty nations all around,
Sunk in ſervility profound,
Or arm'd but in a deſpot's cauſe;
Impell'd by Freedom's magic charm,
She bade her couchant lion arm,
And taught her Kings to fear the ſpirit of her laws.

XIV.

Whence was this recent tide of woe?
Can ſighs from thee, ſtern nation, ſpring?
From Gratitude thy ſorrows flow,
And weep the Father and the King;
Trembling ſhe ſees that mighty mind,
To fever's burning rage reſign'd,
Where late each temper'd virtue ſhone.
If human hopes of ſuccour fail,
Oh! let her prayers with heav'n prevail—
The patriot king reſtor'd, fills his paternal throne.

XV.

To thee, fair realm, at heav'n's award,
A year profuſe in bleſſings came;
For when it heal'd thy wounded Lord,
It fix'd thy greatneſs and thy fame.
Luxuriant plenty decks thy ſhores,
And ſee, where ſound yon daſhing oars,
On Peace enamour'd Commerce ſmiles;
His lov'd ſociety ſhe craves,
And ſhews her dowry, which the waves
From every region bear to theſe her favorite iſles.

XVI.

Perfect, thou youngeſt child of time!
Thy predeceſſors noble care:
Let virtue, in each peopled clime,
Freedom's unſullied ſtandard rear;
The ſanguine ſword of diſcord ſheath,
And o'er the harraſs'd nations breath
The renovating gales of peace;
Bid thy mild ſuns to Britain's king
Ariſe with healing on their wing:
Then will his country's joys admit no more encreaſe!

ELEGY I.

LAODAMIA.

LAODAMIA *was the wife of* PROTESILAUS, *King of Theſſaly, who was ſlain in the Trojan war. The night after his death his ghoſt appeared to her, and ſhe expired.*

THE midnight centinel has hail'd the moon,
Whoſe ſilent radiance gilds the duſky air;
Again the favouring Muſe I importune,
And wander forth her converſe mild to ſhare.

In yonder grove the Goddeſs firſt appear'd,
As gathering violets I beſide it ſtray'd:
There firſt the lyre's harmonious ſwell I heard,
I turn'd aſtoniſh'd, and beheld the maid.

Fancy with flowers had wreath'd her waving hair;
Her mantling cheek with rich expreſſion glow'd;
Sportive as youthful Hebe's was her air;
Her ſparkling eyes her birth cœleſtial ſhew'd,

I gaz'd, I worſhip'd, ſhe benignly ſmil'd.
"Fear not," ſhe ſaid, and dried the ſtarting tear,
"The Muſe hath lift'ned to thy numbers wild,
"And oft at evening ſhall await thee here."

Bleſs'd aſſignation! frequent here I'll ſtray,
Oh night! to lonely muſing ſacred ſtill,
When leafy boughs embrown the lunar ray,
And the faint breeze ſighs to the murmuring rill.

This is the hour, when ſuperſtition reigns,
When ſhrouded ſpectres through the church-yard roam,
When ſportive fays miſlead benighted ſwains,
And prowling witchcraft leaves its dreary home.

The priſoner now, in rapturous ſlumber bleſs'd,
Enjoys his liberty, and ſcorns his foes;
While honeſt Induſtry, by toil oppreſs'd,
Taſtes the reviving cordial of repoſe.

Now patient woe, whoſe meek dejected breaſt
Hides from the ſcoffing world its ſecret pain,
Indulges ſorrow in an ample feaſt,
Till weary Nature can no more ſuſtain.

So mourn'd of old the fair Theſſalian queen,
Connubial martyr to the adulterous wars;
So oft the mourner on her couch was ſeen,
Her ſtreaming eyes fix'd on the radiant ſtars.

Alas! what anguiſh tore her faithful heart
As her ſoul ſtruggled in a laſt adieu!
Whilſt her lov'd Lord, by fate compell'd to part,
On full-orb'd glory fix'd his ardent view.

Love wak'd her fears, and while the Grecian train
In the wide arms of rocky Aulis lay,
She urg'd oppoſing oracles in vain;
The chief ſtill panted for the martial fray.

The ſails expand, behold the mourner now
Sink in th' embraces of ſupporting friends,
Whilſt the griev'd monarch, from the ſhips tall prow,
To pitying Juno his belov'd commends.

In vain her handmaids, with conſoling care,
Exclaim "thy hero ſhall return with joy;
"Haſte, weave the purple robe; the crown prepare;
"Leave ſorrow to the widow'd dames of Troy."

The pride of birth, the pomp of courts, is vain:
She ſits, a monument of ſilent woe;
And now ſhe fears the terrors of the main,
Now the cloſe ambuſh of the wily foe.

Meantime the huſband, ſedulous for fame,
Firſt draws his beaked veſſels to the ſtrand.
See him with Phrygia's chief the combat claim,
And fall the earlieſt victim to his hand.

Even as his foot firſt preſs'd the hoſtile ſoil,
Tremendous Hector rais'd his mortal ſpear,
"Thus, proud Theſſalian, terminates thy toil,
"Com'ſt thou from Greece to feed our vultures here?"

Now reign'd dull midnight: and in ſhort repoſe
The ſorrowing queen eſſay'd to baniſh care,
Yet ev'n in ſlumber imag'd Phrygian foes,
And vow'd to Juno, ſacrifice and prayer,

When lo! the king his ſhadowy form uprear'd;
His deep wound heal'd, his garments cleans'd from gore,
Beauty and ſweetneſs in his look appear'd,
As when he firſt the nuptial chaplet wore.

"Come, lovely mourner, ever faithful bride,
"Vain was thy parting charge, thy tender fear:
"Thy prayers, thy offerings, fate's award deny'd:
"My victim life was given to Hector's ſpear.

"Come partner of my ſoul; my ſpirit roves
"Reſtleſs, unhappy, whilſt depriv'd of thee.
"Together will we ſeek the myrtle groves,
"The ſeat of lovers faithful once as we."

"I come, my lord," the ſtarting matron cried,
"In ſpight of Hector now for ever bleſs'd."
Then as the phantom fled, ſhe groan'd and died,
Her pale cheek drooping on her ſnowy breaſt.

ELEGY II.

To a LADY,

With the COLLECTION of MISCELLANEOUS POETRY,

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR IN 1786.

FRIEND of my ſoul, accept from Friendſhip's hand
The grateful garland to thy virtues due;
Oh! ſmile propitious on the votive band
Whoſe flowers once ſhelter'd by thy favour grew.

Rude, and uncultur'd in my infant ſoul,
The ſeeds of poeſy, profuſely ſpread,
By nature ſown, nor yet had art's controul
To ſeemly order the redundance led.

Yet thee they pleas'd: thy poliſh'd taſte approv'd
The ſimple carrol of my untaught lays.
And ſee! th' ambitious muſe, by thee belov'd,
Now ſtands a candidate for public praiſe.

Shine, ſun of hope! but ah; the clouds of fear
Alternate chill me with foreboding gloom;
Bright fairy viſions riſe, and diſappear,
As praiſe and cenſure ſeem, by turns, my doom.

Say, gentle friend, ſhould ſcorn, with murderous ſmile,
Launch her keen arrow at my victim page;
Should critic cenſure, rich with many a ſpoil,
Conſign my labours to oblivion's rage:

Will not thy boſom with reſentment glow?
Reſentment mix'd with pity's ſoftening tear.
And wilt thou not appear to ward the blow
With Candour's buckler arm'd, and Friendſhip's ſpear?

Yet all in vain; thy pious zeal will prove,
The ſhaft of ridicule reſiſtleſs flies;
Vain thy conſoling, animating love,
The timid muſe repents, deſpairs, and dies.

Then let me aſk thee, when the tuneful power
"Her nightly viſions" ſhall no more repeat?
When active duty, ſeizing every hour,
Shall cloud gay fancy's viſionary ſeat?

When ſweet forgetfulneſs (what numerous years
Ere then ſhall lapſe) the paſt indulgent veils?
When diſappointment wipes away her tears,
And quiet peace and ſtill content prevails?

Yet canſt thou then approve, with preference kind,
The inſipid converſe of the village dame?
Tho' taſte and ſcience quit the buſy mind,
Still ſhall the honeſt heart thy favour claim.

Oh! would that health, as ſurely may again,
O'er thy lov'd form her healing balm diffuſe;
As I ſhall ſtill thy dear eſteem retain,
E'en when deſerted by th' inſpiring Muſe.

ELEGY III.

To LAURA.

HOW long, how well, we've lov'd; Oh Laura, ſay!
Bid recollection trace the diſtant hour
When firſt we met in life's delightful May,
And our warm hearts confeſs'd fair Friendſhip's power.

Recall the portrait of the ingenuous mind,
Which from experience no ſtern precepts drew:
When gay, impetuous, innocent, and kind,
From taſte congenial love ſpontaneous grew.

Deep had we quaff'd the cup of childiſh joy;
The ſimple ſweet our nicer taſte diſdain'd.
We thought youth's promis'd feaſt would never cloy,
And of the future fairy proſpects feign'd.

Time lifts the curtain of expected years;
Eager we ruſh the imagin'd good to find.
Say, if the bleſſing, when poſſeſs'd, appears
Fair, as the phantom that allur'd thy mind,

Doth the ſtern world thoſe faultleſs friends diſcloſe,
Thy guileleſs candour imag'd to thy ſoul?
Doth virtue guard thee from inſidious blows,
Or ſenſe the ſhafts of calumny controul?

For me! I thought the golden wreath of fame
Still in my reach, and like a trifler play'd:
But when I turn'd the glorious prize to claim,
My hopes had faded in oblivion's ſhade.

The dear aſſociates, we in youth rever'd,
The world's rude changes from our arms have drove:
Some in the grave's dark cells, have diſappear'd;
Some loſt by diſtance; ſome eſtrang'd in love.

Yet there are views, which never will deceive,
In one ſure proſpect no falſe colours blend:
Death on our brows will preſs his cypreſs wreath,
And all our wiſhes in the duſt will end.

Perchance, ere yet, yon zenith'd ſun ſhall lave
In the ſalt deep, my conflict will be o'er.
Then, Laura, bending o'er my turf-clad grave,
Shall ſhed the tear, which I ſhall feel no more.

Or, if allotted many lengthened years,
We walk conſociate through the tedious gloom,
'Till each lov'd object gradual diſappears,
And our dim viſion but diſcerns the tomb:

Still our try'd faith ſhall ſhame the fickle herd,
Whoſe civil forms are cold and unendear'd:
Nor ſhall a caſual ſlight, or dubious word,
Efface the kindneſs we have long rever'd.

Friendſhip's ſweet pleaſures bleſs'd our early hours
With tender fellowſhip of hopes and fears:
Our ripen'd age ſhall feel its nobler powers;
Its calm endearments ſooth our drooping years.

Then, when the levities of mirth offend,
When paſſion ceaſes its tormenting ſtrife;
How ſweet in converſe with an aged friend,
To trace th' eventful hiſtory of life.

From preſent ſorrow, laſſitude, and pains,
To lift the ſoul to glory's promis'd ſphere:
There may we meet, and, where love ever reigns,
Perfect the union which we cheriſh'd here.

ELEGY IV.

To the SAME,

UPON HER EXPRESSING AN UNFAVOURABLE IDEA OF ONE OF

The AUTHOR's FRIENDS.

ARE ſouls congenial? and can Laura's mind,
Accuſtom'd truth and prudence to revere,
Sink by raſh cenſure, or contempt unkind:
Minds like her own, to truth and prudence dear?

What tho' perchance the ſeeds of attic taſte,
Rich efflorescence, Nature's hand withheld;
Tho' Science ne'er their nightly vigils grac'd
With wit and ſenſe, like Laura's, unexcell'd.

Deem not the goddeſs niggard in her ſtores;
A thouſand latent talents are enſhrin'd.
She blends, appropriates, contraſts, explores,
And, various as the feature, moulds the mind.

All have their uſes. 'Tis to ſome aſſign'd,
As ſings the ſage,* a narrow round to tread,
To fill the lowlier uſes of their kind
With ſilent goodneſs, or with ſenſe unread.

All cannot boaſt, like thee, a judgment keen
Our courſe to point, our errors to retrieve:
Yet for fall'n man their taſk is not too mean,
Who mourn the woes, they know not to relieve.

The regal oak, in air ſupremely towers,
And amply ſpreads each grand umbrageous arm:
Yet not neglected glow the vernal flowers,
Whoſe gay enamel bids the valley charm.

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* Dr. Johnſon's Elegy on the Death of Dr. Levet.

"His virtues walk'd their narrow round."

To the tall tree, when lowering ſtorms affright,
We fly for ſhelter, and its foliage bleſs.
In fertile vales, when peaceful ſkies invite,
We praiſe gay Nature in her humble dreſs.

In various trials is thy merit ſhown:
Then to perfection urge thy noble aim.
Worth may exiſt, albeit to thee unknown;
And Genius, which thy houſehold gods diſclaim.

In me mean deference would my love demean.
Can ſervile awe thy juſt eſteem retain?
Shall friendſhip prove an oriental queen,
And fear the impulſe of the ſoul reſtrain?

No! be reproof her office, and do thou,
Still as thou feeſt my angry paſſion blaze,
Teach me my fault with candour to avow,
And make me worthier of thy love and praiſe.

Yet cautious check my temper's ardent force,
Would'ſt thou annihilate the honeſt zeal,
Whoſe big emotion burſts from Friendſhip's ſource,
And which in all its warmth for thee I feel.

ELEGY V.

OCCASIONED BY OFTEN DREAMING

Of a Deceaſed Friend.

AH friend belov'd! who, when in human mould,
With care aſſiduous watch'd my infant hours,
Anxious to ſee the tender plant unfold,
Anxious to rear the frail expanding flowers.

Ah friend belov'd! whoſe ſorrows oft hath drown'd
Thy Julia's cheek with ſympathetic tears,
When the ſtern world upon thy fortunes frown'd,
Or pains inceſſant rack'd thy drooping years.

Thy form, familiar to my mental ſight,
Thy ſufferings, grav'd on mem'ry's living ſcroll,
Employ the paſſing viſion of the night,
And fill with penſive retroſpect my ſoul.

Unbodied ſpirit! doſt thou yet retain
The ſtrong affinity of mortal ties?
Still doſt thou hovering round my couch remain,
And give thy image to my cloſing eyes?

Oft to thy friendly boſom have I fled,
When ſharp affliction ſtung my youthful heart,
And art thou, long th' aſſociate of the dead,
Yet recollective of thy wonted part?

My matron cares do theſe thy pity move,
As did the anguiſh of my childiſh years?
Would'ſt thou renew thy offices of love,
Relieve my griefs, and diſſipate my fears?

'Tis ſurely thus, when ſleep awhile ſuſpends
The deadly preſſure of this clay machine,
The mind ſprings forth to meet departed friends,
And catch a proſpect of the world unſeen.

Th' unbounded ſoul, from cumbrous matter free,
Feels a ſhort foretaſte of its future powers.
It cleaves the air, it penetrates the ſea,
Enjoys reſplendent ſuns, and fairy bowers.

Fancy, while judgement ſleeps, with mingled hues
Depicts each paſt occurrence of the day;
And now ſhe blends them with gay feſtal views;
Now fills the ſcene with horror and diſmay.

Whate'er ſhe fables, her exiſtence ſhews
A principle, to matter unallied,
Whoſe ever active eſſence ſcorns repoſe,
Nor needs corporeal organs to decide.

The ſleep of Nature never could o'er cloud,
Oh wonderous ſoul! thy intellectual ray.
Nor ſhall the ſilent tomb and winding ſhroud
Huſh thee in ſlumber 'till time's final day.

No long ſuſpenſion of the conſcious mind,
No reſt to unrepentent guilt, is giv'n.
Nor muſt the dying Chriſtian wait to find
The ſure, the promis'd, recompence of heav'n.

The enraptur'd ſoul, all baſe alloy remov'd,
Sees all around it worlds of bliſs ariſe:
Or hovering o'er the friends in life belov'd,
Aſſiſt their painful journey to the ſkies.

Delightful hope! then ſtill is Mary near,
My nobler being now her care ſuſtains,
My tender friend, my Guardian Angel here,
My future pilot to the heav'nly plains.

ELEGY VI.

The MUSES' VINDICATION.

DISCARD the muſe—thy ſounding lyre forego,
Drive from thy boſom verſe, and all its charms;
Why ſharpen every nerve to ſuffer woe,
Give paſſion force, and weaken reaſon's arms?

He, who man's propereſt ſtation can diſcern,
For thee an humble dwelling hath prefer'd:
Where daily care thy daily bread ſhall earn,
And Fame's bewitching trump be never heard.

Drive from thy thought thoſe faſcinating powers,
Who with romantic dreams enchant thy ſoul.
The rugged world demands thy anxious hours,
And fortune bids thee her attacks controul.

Why rural talk, or rural ſports diſdain,
And lonely muſing nightly wander far,
Chaunting to ſilver Cynthia ſome ſad ſtrain,
Of heroes ſlumbering on the couch of war?

'Tis thine to waſte o'er books thy midnight oil,
'Tis thine to warble forth ſome love-lorn tale;
More bleſt, more uſeful, is the ſwain, whoſe toil
Prepares the glebe, or reaps the ripen'd vale.

Beneath yon elm, amid thoſe humble ſwains,
Mortality's laſt rites thy bones ſhall ſhare;
No future poets ſhall repeat thy ſtrains,
No ſtrangers ſeek thy grave to ſhed a tear.

Or grant ſome generous friend, with active zeal,
Tears from Oblivion's graſp thy heart-taught lays,
The ſtudious Critic's cold contempt to feel,
Uncultur'd nature muſt not hope for praiſe.

To wiſer purpoſe then thy powers direct;
With active intereſt guard thy ſteady breaſt.
Do liberal thoughts command the world's reſpect?
Do finer feelings make their owners bleſt?

Thus Prudence urg'd; when, lo! the Muſe appears;
The ſacred cauſe of letter'd eaſe ſhe pleads,
Sparkling intelligence her viſage wears,
And thus the graceful orator proceeds:—

Juſt were the cenſure, was our aim confin'd
To robe in tiſſue garb ſome idle tale;
To break the juſt gradation of mankind,
And with phantaſtic ſhews thy peace aſſail:

But know our ſtations. Handmaids we appear,
In Virtue's court to robe the Queen divine.
From her the high beheſt of truth we hear,
And thence to man tranſmit the lore benign.

Thou, Julia, witneſs, when beſide the grove,
Thy hands firſt bound thine hair in many a braid,
As pleas'd for thee the laurel wreath we wove,
Ere we beſtow'd the gift, my ſiſters ſaid:

A fit companion for thy vacant hours,
This wreath and lyre in favour we beſtow.
But e'er when life calls forth thy active powers,
Thou muſt the muſe, the wreath, and lyre, forego.

Let not unletter'd ſcorn, with mean delight,
Produce thy actions to traduce thy name.
We ſing the virtues we ourſelves excite,
And give not indolence, but merit, fame.

From taunting ſatire, from unliſcens'd praiſe,
Do thou with noble indèpendence ſoar.
Give to morality thy nobleſt lays,
And fix thy hopes, where time deſtroys no more.

Then, when the virtuous precept fires thy breaſt,
When the ſigh riſes to be prais'd, and known,
Adopt the manners, which thy judgement bleſs'd,
And ſave, from folly ſave—thyſelf alone.

So ſhall thy eyes with angel ken ſurvey
Fame, Pleaſure, Wealth, deſpoil'd of all their charms;
So ſhalt thou ſink upon thy bed of clay,
Calm as the babe now reſting on thy arms.

PASTORAL I.

CELADON.

OH! Celadon, did not the hours
Appear to glide rapid away,
When with me 'mid freſh bloſſoming flowers
You carold the beauties of May.
When ſpring, with its infantine green,
Lightly ting'd the tall elms of the grove;
Ah! Celadon, ſweet was the ſcene,
Its beauty was heighten'd by love.

Of all you then ſung, not a ſtrain
But I ſtill can diſtinctly repeat;
Ah! youth, but reproaches are vain,
Can you ſay your behaviour is meet?
Is it juſt to abandon with ſcorn
The heart you ſo hardly ſubdu'd,
And to leave the poor virgin forlorn,
Whom late you ſo fervently woo'd?

When you gave me the eglantine wreath,
You embelliſhed the gift with your praiſe;
You only deſign'd to deceive,
Yet you ſpake to the heart in your lays.
My beauty was then all your theme,
In beauty I never took pride;
I thought it procur'd your eſteem,
I knew not its value beſide.

You promis'd your paſſion ſhould laſt
Till by death's icy rigour repreſt,
Yet now all your ardour is paſt,
And you live at that paſſion to jeſt.

Was the fetter that bound you too weak;
Oh! why is my Celadon ſtrange?
'Till ſorrow had faded my cheek,
I ſaw in the fountain no change.

Can you ſay my behaviour was light,
Was it eaſy my favour to gain,
When I promis'd your love to requite,
Could others attention obtain?
To a teſt all my words may be brought,
Let my life by ſuſpicion be try'd;
You, Celadon, knew every thought,
I had none that I ſtudied to hide.

You ſure muſt remember the day
You wounded your hand with the hook;
Again how I fainted away
When you reſcu'd my lamb from the brook.
Oh! how my heart flutters; e'en yet
I think of your danger with tears,
Yet Celadon ſtrives to forget,
At once, both my love and my fears.

Fond fool! do I utter my grief
To the man from whoſe falſehood it ſprung;
Shall the neſt plunder'd dove ſeek relief
From the ſtripling that raviſhed her young?
Yet ſhepherds are free from deceit,
Their manners are ſimple and plain;
From all kind compaſſion I meet,
And all thy injuſtice diſdain.

My mother has often times read,
While I reel'd off my ſpindle at night,
That lions and tygers have bled;
All vanquiſh'd by ſhepherds in fight.
'Tis right for ſuch deeds to exult,
For virtue and courage they prove;
But, oh! it is baſe to inſult
The girl you have injur'd in love.

Your bride ſhe is lovely, I fear,
I've heard ſhe is richer than me;
The lot of the poor is ſevere,
Ev'n lovers from poverty flee.

Yet my father, I've often been told,
Had once a large portion of ſheep,
But the winter flood broke down his fold,
And buried them all in the deep.

My mother, alas! ſhe is dead;
My ſorrow ſhe now cannot feel;
To earn her a morſel of bread
I work'd very hard at my wheel.
She ſaid, for my duty and love,
A bleſſing I ſurely ſhould know;
I truſt I ſhall find it above,
For grief is my portion below.

I have heard our good curate oft tell
Many things about Angels of light,
That in virtue and truth they excel;
Such Celadon ſeem'd in my ſight.
Oh! break thou too credulous heart,
I am ſick of thy paſſionate ſtrife;
The victim of Celadon's art
Is weary of him and of life.

Yet the curſes of vengeance to frame
Is a ſin that I dare not commit;
This heart, which ſtill throbs at his name,
Will never the outrage permit.
My wrongs, oh! they all are forgiven,
And my laſt dying wiſh it ſhall be;
May he never be queſtion'd by heaven,
For vows he has broken to me.

Go fetch home thy new wedded fair,
Thy joys I will never moleſt;
I have found out a cure for deſpair;
My heart ſhall be quickly at reſt.
No more ſhall the night's peaceful air
Be vex'd by my clamorous breath
I have found out a cure for deſpair,
'Tis ſilence—the ſilence of death.

PASTORAL II.

FLORIZEL.

INTREAT me not, Stella, to go
Any more to the ſports on the green;
My heart is too heavy with woe,
To partake in the feſtival ſcene.
Where laughter and pleaſure invite,
Let the gay and the happy repair;
But think'ſt thou theſe ſcenes will delight
The dim vacant eye of deſpair.

You tell me my treſſes hang rude,
That my garments ungracefully ſit;
Can a mind, by affliction ſubdu'd,
Theſe trivial attentions admit?

Whilſt muſing on Florizel's worth,
Shall my hands my looſe treſſes reſtrain?
Oh! never, unleſs the cold earth
Will give me my ſhepherd again.

When the bells of the village, to-day,
The bridals of Philida told,
I fear'd I ſhould quite faint away;
My heart in an inſtant was cold.
Did you fancy it envy? oh! no,
I thought of the deep tolling bell,
When with cadence, ſo ſolemn and ſlow,
It rung out my Florizel's knell.

He droop'd as the flowers droop beneath
The ſcythe, when it cuts down the vale;
He ſhrunk, in the chill graſp of death,
Like bloſſoms in tempeſts of hail.
Thoſe flow'rets the ſpring will renew,
And reſtore the green tint to the grove;
But the grave, from my paſſionate view,
Will for ever detain him I love.

His father, in agony wild,
Has torn the grey locks from his head;
His mother ſtill calls for the child
By whom ſhe was cheriſh'd and fed.
Him the aged would ever commend,
They pointed him out to the young;
Yet his manners did never offend,
For gentleneſs dwelt on his tongue.

His eyes, oh! they ſweetly expreſs'd
Peace and love in their radiance ſerene
Sincerity glow'd in his breaſt,
And appear'd in his frank open mien.
I could dwell on this paſſionate theme,
Still muſing on joys that are fled;
They are vaniſh'd, as flies the faint dream
That hovers around the ſick bed.

You tell me my lambs are all loſt,
The tidings are nothing to me;
That my bower too is ſtripp'd by the froſt,
That bower I will never more ſee.

Let not ſpring bid the violet blow,
Nor the pallid leav'd primroſe unfold;
Shall the woodbine luxuriantly grow
When the hand of the planter is cold?

You talk of my beauty and wit,
Saying grief is more fatal than time;
That mortals are born to ſubmit,
And ſorrow indulg'd is a crime:—
When the heart is ſerene and at eaſe,
Theſe precepts ſound ſmooth to the ear;
But reaſons ſo futile as theſe,
Affliction refuſes to hear.

Would you ſoothe me, oh! talk of the youth;
Of the graces he largely poſſeſs'd:
His virtue, his courage, his truth,
And the grief that the village expreſs'd.
Of Love! too intenſe to deceive,
Recall all the proofs that he gave,
And ſtill at the ſummons of eve
Go with me to weep o'er his grave.

There I yield all my ſoul up to grief,
Could you think there is pleaſure in tears?
Nor blame my too eaſy belief,
There I fancy his ſpirit appears.
I hear his lov'd voice in the breeze,
He calls for his Mira aloud:
Now I ſee him glide light through the trees;
Now he floats on the ſwift ſailing cloud.

To my cottage exhauſted I creep,
Tir'd Nature ſome reſpite demands;
'Tis in vain that I ſeek it in ſleep,
By my ſide my lov'd Florizel ſtands.
Now he ſeems like the youth that I loſt,
With the ſmile I was wont to adore:
Now he fades to a pale viſag'd ghoſt;
Now I ſee the lov'd viſion no more.

My friends talk of comfort, oh! where
Can I find it, in meadow or grove?
Can the heart-ſoothing bleſſing be there?
They are full of the image of love.

To hear the ſweet nightingale ſing,
With him have I walk'd through the grove;
And ſtill at the coming of ſpring
My flocks to the meadow he drove.

Thus through the ſad viſions of night,
And the ſcenes which the morning reſtores,
My ſoul, ſtill with penſive delight,
Its dear but loſt idol explores.
Oh! my friends, I'm in haſte to be gone,
Life ſeems to me dreary and bare:
I have form'd one poor wiſh, only one,
'Tis the comfortleſs wiſh of deſpair.

But ye who compaſſionate grieve,
O'er ſorrows ye cannot remove,
Allow me, to each, to bequeath
Some ſlender memorial of love.
While to theſe fond remembrance imparts
A ſacred though fanciful worth,
Poor Mira ſhall live in your hearts,
When ſhe moulders away in the earth.

I've a treaſure from which I'll ne'er part,
'Tis a lock of my Florizel's hair:
I hold it full oft to my heart,
And it ſoftens the pangs that are there.
Dear ringlet! no more ſhalt thou wave
In curls o'er his forehead benign:
I ſnatch'd thee from Florizel's grave,
To make thee companion of mine.

Not with ſorrow, or agony wild,
I look to that harbour of reſt;
Thou haſt ſeen a tir'd petulant child
Drop aſleep on its mother's fond breaſt.
Let yon weary labourer ſpeak,
When at noon-tide he faints o'er his ſpade,
When he wipes the big drops from his cheek,
And wiſhes for night's dewy ſhade.

That long awful night which ſhall laſt
To the dawn of unlimited day;
That ſlumber which will not be paſt
'Till the world, like a dream, fades away.

My friends, if your aid I decline,
And theſe bleſſings with eagerneſs crave,
Forgive me; affliction like mine
Can only repoſe in the grave.

Prepare then the ſlow moving herſe,
On my corſe be the roſemary flung;
Let the choriſters o'er me rehearſe
The dirge they o'er Florizel ſung.
When in winter ye meet round the hearth,
The days that are paſt to review;
When ye talk of my Florizel's worth,
Remember his Mira was true.

PASTORAL III.

GERALDINE.

The Scene is ſuppoſed to be in ſome part of the Highlands.

MY language is rude and uncooth,
My manners are ſimple and plain:
Oh! Geraldine, ſcorn not a youth
Whoſe heart is too honeſt to feign.
By others thy charms are deſcrib'd;
They talk of their kind and degree:
Such paſſion my ſoul hath imbib'd,
Thou ſeem'ſt all perfection to me.

In thy eye a mild energy flames,
Soft elegance floats in thy air,
And methinks every feature proclaims
A mind correſpondently fair.
Dear maid! I conjure thee, appear
The angel that Nature deſign'd;
Be honeſt, at leaſt be ſincere,
Though ſincerity makes thee unkind.

My temper is ardent and warm,
I was bred on the mountain's rough ſide;
The labour, that ſtrengthen'd my arm,
With courage my boſom ſupply'd.
My virtues reſemble a ſoil
That boaſts no improvement from art;
The offspring of nature and toil
They glow with full force in my heart.

I have met the keen wind of the North,
When it brought the thick tempeſt of ſnow;
I have ſeen the fork'd lightning burſt forth,
When the foreſts have ſhrunk from the blow.

To reſcue my lambs and my ſheep
The loud mountain torrent I've brav'd:
It was clamorous, ſtormy, and deep,
But the tremblers I happily ſav'd.

I have climb'd to the top of the cliff,
Whoſe ſummit bends far o'er the main;
From thence I've look'd out for the ſkiff
Of the fiſher, beneath me, in vain.
Yet here, on its uttermoſt verge,
Their young ones the Penguins will rear;
What time they from ocean emerge,
And ſpread their broad pinions in air.

There the eggs of the ſea fowl I ſought,
And the ſamphire that redolent blooms;
From that eminence haply I brought
The feathers that form thy light plumes.
There I clung while the ſpray of the waves
Roſe like miſts o'er the rocks at my feet,
And the birds darting faſt from the caves,
Seem'd with clamour to guard their retreat.

I have ſail'd on the lake in my boat,
When the Weſt hath look'd duſky and red,
When the Sea-mew, with ominous note,
Seem'd to call to the feaſt of the dead.
From the hills the ſtorm menacing howl'd,
The firs thund'ring fell down the ſteep;
O'er the ſky darkneſs awfully ſcowl'd,
And horribly roar'd the vex'd deep.

My veſſel o'erwhelm'd in the ſhock,
I roſe on the ſalt ſurge up-born;
I ſwam to the caves in the rock,
And waited the coming of morn.
There chill'd by the keen driving blaſt,
And drench'd by the pitileſs rain,
The day has reliev'd me at laſt,
But the night never heard me complain.

I have paſt o'er the mountain, which ſhrouds
Its ſummit in regions divine,
When the moon, ſailing ſwift through the clouds,
Tipp'd with ſilver the arrowy pine.

There I met the proceſſion of death;
It paſs'd me in ſhadowy glare,
Slow it mov'd to the valley beneath,
Then melted illuſive in air.

A ſpirit intrepid as mine,
Theſe dangers, theſe terrors, could prove;
But do not, oh! damſel divine,
Bid it feel the long anguiſh of love.
Would'ſt thou bid me approve the regard
And the faith that has never deceiv'd,
Oh! think of ſome enterprize hard,
And thine eyes ſhall behold it achiev'd.

Young Carol in dancing is ſkill'd;
He the pipe's touching notes can prolong:
I have liſten'd with extacy thrill'd,
For love was the theme of his ſong.
New faſhions I ne'er could deviſe;
He varies his habit and air;
My ſoul could the trifler deſpiſe,
But I hear he is lov'd by the fair.

Then teach me, dear girl of my ſoul,
Every grace that thy taſte ſhall commend;
Tho' I brook not the nod of controul,
My mind to thy guidance ſhall bend:
Thou ſhalt ſmile, Oh! thy ſmiles will excel
The mornings that June gives to view,
When the woodbine perfumes all the dell,
And the roſe bluſhes ſoft through the dew.

I would talk of my flock and my herd;
But a venal conſent I deteſt,
'Tis ſufficient what fortune conferr'd,
Contentment and induſtry bleſt.
How pleaſing the toils wou'd appear
That prudence enjoin'd for thy ſake;
How grateful the fruits of the year
If Geraldine was to partake.

Thou art artleſs and modeſt, my love,
But alas! thou art tender and frail;
Thou ſeem'ſt like the innocent dove,
Or the lilly that grows in the vale,

All delicate, ſoft, and refin'd,
Thou call'ſt for protection and care;
For the world is ſtill falſe and unkind
To thoſe who are friendleſs and fair.

Thy huſband, protector, and friend,
Oh! let me thoſe titles receive;
When this arm ſhall be ſlack to defend,
This boſom no longer ſhall heave.
Thou, Geraldine, round our receſs,
The ſmile of chaſte tenderneſs throw;
And the cottage thy preſence ſhall bleſs,
Will ſeem a new Eden below.

CHARACTER I.

FORTITUDE.

AURELIA.

BEHOLD the venerable Aloe meet
The froſt of ages with perennial bloom:
On its firm leaf an hundred annual ſuns
Have pour'd from Leo's height the torrid ray.
As oft the painted offſpring of the ſpring
Have opened their frail bloſſoms and expir'd.
Diſdaining tranſient praiſe, ſhe ſlow unfolds
Her ſnowy flowers, by centuries matur'd,
To charm with fragrance children yet unborn,
And mock the periſhable race of man.

Thou, my eſteem'd Aurelia, too can'ſt boaſt
An excellence by added years improv'd.
Let beauty, like the fluttering butterfly,
Enjoy a ſummer's glory. Thou can'ſt pleaſe
Ev'n in the autumn of declining life;
Nor is the dreaded winter of old age
Deſtructive to the produce of thy ſoul:
Still ſhall experience teach, good humour charm,
Judgement convince, and poliſh'd ſenſe improve.
Nor theſe thy only praiſes. Thou haſt met
Thoſe ſharpeſt daggers of adverſity,
That pierce with thrilling ſenſe the nerves of pain;
Thy frame with weak decripitude oppreſs'd
Beyond the common lot, and from thy arms
Thy boſom's treaſures prematurely ſnatch'd,
And born in life's full vigour to the tomb:
Yet thy calm Fortitude ſuſtain'd the ſtorm,
Like the firm Oak beſet around with winds,
Oppreſs'd, but not o'erthrown. To thy abode
The gay, the happy, and the young, repair;
Aſſur'd to hear no querulous complaints
At wayward fortune, and degenerate times;

Aſſur'd to ſee thy ſprightly ſallies wake
The unembitter'd laugh, to humour dear.
Pleas'd they arraign the theme, which paints old age
Auſtere, and uncomplying. Pleas'd they find
Superiour minds, diſdaining narrow views,
Aſſert the native dignity of man.
Pilgrims on earth, and journeying on to heav'n,
The ſeat of true felicity, and peace;
They never ſeek the beauteous exiles here,
Nor blame the want by Providence deſign'd.

CHARACTER II.

SENSIBILITY.

CELINDA.

SAY, ſweet Mimoſa!* wherefore doſt thou fly
The gentleſt touch? why droop thy ſhrivell'd leaves?
I would not harm thee, trembler; I but meant
To view thy gloſſy foliage, to explore
The wond'rous mechaniſm which contracts
Thy flowers ſuſceptible. In the vaſt chain,
The fine gradation of created forms,
Thine is no common rank. Thou could'ſt not meet,
Like mountain pines, the rigour of the froſt;
Or, as the oak, enroot thyſelf in ſtorms.

* The Senſitive Plant.

Come, let me bear thee to the ſhelter'd South,
Ev'n there the fervour of the noon-day ſun,
Or the chill dews of eve, would fatal prove.
Too delicate exotic, wherefore quit
Thy native ſoil? our rugged changeful clime
Ill ſuits thy efflorescence frail as fair.
In this rare plant my lov'd Celinda's mind
Is typify'd. On her the ſofteſt gales,
That from misfortunes wintry quarters blow,
Fall with the force of tempeſts. Tender fear,
Fond love, and ſympathizing pity, form
Her mental portrait. There in vain we ſeek
The conſcious firmneſs of heroic worth,
Or patient fortitude, who calmly bears
The ſecret bitings of the mortal aſp,
And hides its wound ev'n from affection's eye.
But, in their ſtead, ſhall pity's pious tear
Bedew Celinda's cheek: ſtill ſhall her tongue
Sweetly repeat the melancholy tale:
Still on the breaſt of ſorrow ſhall ſhe pour
Compaſſion's balm, and on pale want beſtow
All, that the voice of lib'ral bounty bids.

CHARACTER III.

GENTLENESS.

MIRANDA.

STUDENT of Nature! if at early prime,
When on th' awaken'd earth Leucothia throws,
From her grey robe, the trembling pearls of dew
For Phœbus to illumine, haply then
Thou rov'ſt through Flora's variegated tribes,
Whether on mead, or copſe, or heath-crown'd hill,
Careleſs, uncultur'd, redolent, they ſpread;
Or thoſe by taſte ſelected to adorn

The proud parterre, or through the ſhrubb'ry's maze
Diſpos'd in artleſs order. To the ſun
They give their hues; their fragrance to the breeze.
Haſt thou beheld the lilly, ſpotleſs queen
Of ſummer's painted offspring? Haſt thou mark'd
Her ſnowy flowers, ſmooth as the ſhining down
On the fledg'd cygnet's gloſſy cheſt? Its ſweets,
When heighten'd by the balm of evening ſhowers,
Thou could'ſt not paſs regardleſs. 'Tis with theſe
Hygeia ſhades the wreath, ſhe annual twines,
To crown the brows of Pæon. Beauteous flower!
Fragile and tranſient. Tranſient too waſt thou,
Belov'd Miranda. Oh! too early loſt
For thy fond friends, too early call'd to bear
The golden palm of immortality,
The glorious meed of excellence like thine.
Retentive Friendſhip, (as her languid arm
Claſps to her breaſt thy urn, and pleas'd enjoys
The ſilent luxury of patient woe)
Bids thy lov'd image riſe! Thy beauteous form,
Fair as the lilly, as the lilly pure;
Thy unoffending life—mild candid life.

No whim of wayward ſpleen, no ſtormy burſt
Of haughty rage, no ſupercilious ſhew
Of talents, falſely brilliant. 'Twas thy aim
To tread the path of goodneſs; to delight
With eaſy mirth, and ſocial converſe all
Within thy ſphere of action; to relieve
Thoſe whom diſcerning Charity led forth
To drink of bounty's full, yet ſober cup;
To give the infant mind that happy bend,
Whoſe ſpring elaſtic lifts the ſoul to heav'n;
To heal thoſe wounds the cauteriſing world
Prints on ingenuous minds, which but the balm
Of ſympathy can medicine. Happy ſoul!
Ev'n in this ſublunary planet bleſs'd,
Thy life the peace of virtue well diſplay'd,
Thy death her fortitude—as infants ſink
On the fond mother's breaſt in ſlumbers calm,
So unappall'd in the chill tyrant's graſp,
I ſaw thee droop beneath his ebon wand,
Dreadful to others, but deſpis'd by thee.
Oh! ſpirit ſoon beatified; oh! friend;
Oh! gentle monitreſs; companion ſweet——

Forgive the tear which rebel Nature ſheds;
The tear by Faith forbidden. Fond regret,
As on thy tomb ſhe lays the votive wreath
Nor venal, nor by adulation wove,
Ev'n on the core of her impaſſion'd heart
She graves the virtues in thy life diſclos'd.
Oh! may ſhe imitate that blameleſs life,
Whoſe end was peace, whoſe iſſue is in heav'n.

CHARACTER IV.

DIFFIDENCE.

STELLA.

FOR your own Stella, Muſes—ſhe whoſe thirſt
With eager ſtealth Caſtalia's ſtream purſues,
A garland weave of flowers, the happy growth
Of Heliconian groves, and bind the wreath
With laurels, crop'd from Delphos,—grace muſt mark
The fair ſelection: Taſte arrange the flowers.
No gaudy foliage, no ill ſorted hues,
No over-weening bloſſoms. Simple all
In unobtruſive elegance. It ſuits
The mind of Stella, the ingenuous mind,
Cultur'd by ſcience and by ſenſe inform'd.
Which, like the primroſe, from the trodden path
Of life retires to decorate the vale.

Ye ſupercilious ſpirits, who deſpiſe
The bluſh of Diffidence, the ſober charm
Of gentleneſs and reaſon, the ſweet tear,
That feeling claims from timid modeſty,
Alive to ſhame and fearful to offend,
Who with the noiſy laugh of wit can drown
The faultering voice of merit, that diſdains
To urge her pleas, ſave to attention's ear.
Know, the rich gem, your folly proudly ſpurns,
Bears on its ſurface grav'd the heavenly form
Of unaſſuming genius. Friendſhip there,
Rob'd in her Roman ſtola, careful lights
Her radiant lamp at Virtue's deathleſs flame.
Beſide her Sympathy, a weeping grace,
Crown'd with the drooping lilly of the vale,
Sits ſmiling through her tears. Fidelity,
A goddeſs rarely found, and ſtrongly mark'd
By truth's irradiate beams, is there pourtray'd.
She, by the fickle world deceiv'd and ſcorn'd,
In Stella's boſom finds a ſafe retreat,
And builds her peaceful habitation there.

A DESCRIPTION OF

RELIGION.

A FRAGMENT.

MY Muſe would lead thee to the fair domain,
Where, thron'd in bliſs, the Sifter Virtues reign;
Known by her heav'nly mein and wide command,
Benign Religion leads the hallow'd band;
Around her brow immortal roſes wave,
Giv'n for her triumph o'er the ghaſtly grave.
For ſhe the ſacred path of Jeſus trod,
And prov'd death vanquiſh'd by the victor God.
To him, pale tyrant, now the taſk is giv'n
To ope to joyful ſaints the golden gates of heav'n.

Hail! hallow'd queen, what tho' thy piercing ſight
Dwells on the regions of eternal light;
Tho' to the ſnares of ſin thou canſt oppoſe
Faith's ſtedfaſt rock, on which the juſt repoſe;
What tho', whilſt priſon'd in this earthly cell,
Thy thoughts with cherubs and with ſeraphs dwell;
Who, pleas'd, for thee the crown and robe prepare,
And eager wiſh thee in their joys to ſhare:
Firſt-born of heaven, of all the virtues queen,
Yet no aſſumings ſtigmatize thy mein.
No ſcorn of others thy meek eyes expreſs;
No modes peculiar rule thy graceful dreſs;
Conſcious of worth, but yet intent to pleaſe,
Thy air is blended majeſty and eaſe.
Thy truths, ſtupendous to the wondering ſage,
The ſimple infants lowly heart engage.
'Tis thine the whirl of youthful blood to calm;
To palſied hands thou giv'ſt thy victor palm.
Thou, and thou only, canſt unhurt ſuſtain
The fiery trial of diſtreſs and pain.
Thine is the glory, unſeduc'd, to rove
Through ſoft proſperity's bewitching grove;

To force profuſion from the hearts ſtrong hold,
And give to Charity his wand of gold.
Alike to thee the world's contempt and praiſe,
Unerring rectitude thy conduct ſways.
But, in mortality's laſt ling'ring hour,
'Tis then thou triumph'ſt with ſuperior pow'r;
For, as eternity withdraws her veil,
Struck by her rays, the lights of ſcience fail,
The ſoul, affrighted at the new ſurvey,
Clings to its burden of diſtemper'd clay,
On the weak aids of failing ſenſe relies,
And, ſhuddering, turns from the diſcloſing ſkies.
Then, whilſt around the pow'rs of darkneſs dance,
And with freſh poiſons barb each mortal lance,
'Tis thine to diſſipate the hell-bred gloom,
To chace the horrors, that o'er-cloud the tomb.
For as thou ſpread'ſt Faith's adamantine ſhield,
The ſhafts of Satan to its temper yield;
The ſoul, compos'd, the untry'd gulph eſſays,
Then ſoars to carol everlaſting praiſe.

ON READING

Mrs. CARTER's

POEMS,

SUCH was the awful dignity of ſong,
When bleſs'd Urania ſtruck her lyre of yore,
Such maxims Pallas gave th' attentive throng,
When Athens liſten'd to her ſacred lore.

Away—ye fables! In ſuch gentle tone
Religion ſpeaks, when, with perſuaſive art,
She makes the awaken'd paſſions all her own,
And ſtamps conviction on the yielding heart.

Boaſt, happy Britain! thy Eliza's ſtrain,
By genius fraught with energy divine,
Avoiding objects periſhing and vain,
Gives its full pomp of verſe to virtue's ſhrine.

Boaſt, that the hand, which elegantly dreſs'd
Sage Epictetus in thy chaſte attire,
Thy claſſic ſtores with richer precepts bleſs'd,
Than ever Pagan wiſdom could inſpire.

Oh! boaſt, that Attic ſweetneſs, in her lays,
With Revelation's awful theme conſpires,
And give the nobleſt guerdon of thy praiſe
To ſtrains adapted to ſeraphic lyres.

On the SONNETS

OF

Mrs. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

THE widow'd turtle, mourning for her love,
Breathes the ſoft plaintive melody of woe:
And ſtreams, that gently ſteal along the grove,
In murmurs dear to melancholy flow.

Yet to thy ſtrains, ſweet nymph of Arun's vale,
Harſh is the turtle's note, and harſh the ſtream,
Ev'n when their echos die upon the gale,
Or catch attention by the lunar beam.

Thy ſtrains ſoul-harrowing melting pity hears,
Yet fears to break thy privacy of pain,
She blots thy page with ſympathetic tears,
And while ſhe mourns thy wrongs enjoys thy ſtrain.

Haſt thou indeed no ſolace? does the earth
Afford no balm thy anguiſh to relieve?
Still muſt thou feel the pang of ſuff'ring worth,
Taught by refinement but to charm and grieve.

Oh! if deſpair'd irects thy penſive eyes
To where death terminates terreſtrial woes,
May faith from thence exalt them to the ſkies,
Where glory's palm for ſuffering virtue grows.

There may thy lyre, whoſe ſweetly magic pow'rs
From pain'd attention forc'd applauding tears,
With hallelujahs fill the eternal bowers,
The theme prolonging through eternal years.

On Mrs. TRIMMER.

IF ſcience, ſenſe, and virtue, claims applauſe,
Why, daughter of the vale, is ſhe unſung,
Whoſe page, deſcribing Nature's ſource and laws,
With truths fair theme informs the infant tongue?

"The poets eye may in fine phrenzy roll,"*
His breaſt may heave with ſtrong conception fraught?
While inſpiration, ſtreaming on his ſoul,
Gives glowing diction and impaſſion'd thought.

* Midſummer Night's Dream.

Genius and taſte may modulate the line,
And chaſte correctneſs guide the choral Muſe;
Yet ſtill, Mentoria, ampler praiſe is thine,
For that thy ſtep inſtruction's path purſues.

Go, ſtamp fair virtue on the ductile ſoul;
O'er humble babes Immanuel's rule extend;
The paſſions early bend to juſt controul,
And form the Chriſtian, Citizen, and Friend.

The untaught child of indigence reclaim,
To happy induſtry its hands apply;
Oh! teach its trembling voice a Saviour's name,
And bid it uſeful live, and joyful die.

Lo! infant cherubs, whoſe immortal powers,
Thy care adapted to heaven's bright abode;
Diſmiſs'd from earth, in ever-blooming bowers,
Will bleſs the hand which led them to their God.

On Miſs SEWARD.

STRIK'ST thou thy lyre, Calliope, again?
The magick of theſe numbers muſt be thine:
Such the bold choral of thy potent ſtrain,
The glow of thought, and energy divine.

No mortal ear hath ever heard its tone,
Since Thracian dames depriv'd thy ſon* of breath;
Who ſang divided love's heart-rending groan
In numbers ſweet as thine on Andre's death.

* Orpheus.

Vain is the ſubterfuge, which ſeeks to hide
The latent goddeſs with a mortal veil;
Let genius, let poetic taſte decide,
To whom belongs Louiſa's plaintive tale.

Haſt thou not heard that Britain, favour'd long
By all thy ſiſters of the tuneful tribe,
Has nurs'd the bold purloiner of thy ſong,
The felon nymph, who dares thy lay tranſcribe.

Riſe, injur'd Muſe! thy priſtine rights diſplay,
Thine is the ſtrain which captivates mankind;
Uſurping Seward ſhall reſign the bay,
By Britain's erring voice to her aſſign'd.

5023874

PELEW.

This POEM *was occaſioned by reading Mr.* KEATE's *animated deſcription of the Pelew iſlands. To thoſe who have not had the pleaſure of peruſing that performance, a few explanatory notes may not be deemed unneceſſary.*

ALONG the ſtar impeopled ſky
Full thirty moons had run,
Since Abba Thule,† with manly grief,
Diſmiſs'd his vent'rous ſon.*

† The Eaſt-India Company's ſhip the Antelope, being wrecked on Oroolong, one of the Pelew iſlands, Abba Thule the king, and his ſubjects, gave the crew a moſt hoſpitable reception, and aſſiſted them with every thing their country afforded.

* The King, at the departure of the Engliſh, entruſted his ſecond ſon, Lee Boo, to the care of Captain Wilſon, that he might, to uſe his own words, be made an Engliſhman.

Go, youth! the prudent Monarch ſaid,
This wond'rous England view:
Go to that diſtant world, diſcloſe
The virtues of Pelew.

To uſeful arts thy hands apply,
To uſeful lore attend,
So ſhall the travels of thy youth
Thy riper age befriend.

For not to pleaſe thy roving eye
Thou ſeek'ſt the land unknown,
But that its wiſdom, arts, and arms,
May dignify thy own.

Nor let the grandeur of the ſcene
With fear thy ſoul appall;
'Tis but a mockery, a ſhew,
True worth tranſcends it all.

Ye friendly ſtrangers! to whoſe care
My darling I confide,
Oh! think, henceforth a father's love
Muſt be by you ſupplied.

Good ſpeed to all, when on this line†
No record I diſcern,
I'll climb the heights of Oroolong,
And wait my ſon's return.

Here ceas'd the juſt, benignant Prince,
The flowing ſails expand,
And Britain's generous tars with grief
Forſake the friendly land.

Remember'd kindneſs fill'd each eye
With ſympathetic tears,
Depreſs'd with woe each feeling heart,
And check'd the parting cheers.*

And now to grace his ſon's return,
When free from regal cares,
The tender father, with delight,
The poliſh'd bone‡ prepares.

---

† Abba Thule enquired of Captain Wilſon how long it might probably be before his ſon returned, and being informed about thirty moons, he made a correſpondent number of knots upon a piece of line, and carefully laid it by.

* The Engliſh were ſo affected at the kindneſs of theſe iſlanders, that they could ſcarce articulate three cheers at parting.

‡ The Pelew Chiefs wear a bone bracelet, as a mark of dignity.

No more on the recording line
A token he diſcerns;
He climbs the heights of Oroolong,
No more his ſon returns.—

Nor yet with tidings of his fate,
Where parts the coral reef,*
He ſees the well known Engliſh ſail,
Or well known Engliſh Chief.

To-morrow's ſun perhaps may bring
The dear expected youth;
He will not yield to mean complaint,
Nor doubt the Engliſh truth.

To-morrow's ſun, Oh King! aſcends,
It ſets unbleſt by thee,
And wherefore did I truſt my child
To yon unpitying ſea?

---

* The Weſtern ſide of the iſlands are incloſed by a reef of coral, upon which the Antelope was wrecked; there is an opening in one part, with a ſufficient depth of water to enable a ſmall veſſel to paſs ſafely.

Cold with my darling lie entomb'd
Each valiant Engliſh friend;
Or would not thoſe I ſav'd from death
To my diſtreſs attend?

The angry ſpirit hath prevail'd, ‡
Its curſe my hopes betray'd,
Yet in the happy iſles above
My motives ſhall be weigh'd.

In thoſe blue fields, thoſe ſunny clouds,
For virtue ſoon confeſs'd,
Lee Boo enjoys perpetual peace,
There too ſhall I be bleſs'd.

So ſpake the Sire, yet ſigh'd to find
His anxious wiſhes vain:
Nor ere muſt Europe's envy'd arts
Adorn his ſimple reign.

---

‡ They have a notion of a bad ſpirit, and future happineſs to the good.

And now he marks the funeral plant,*
And lays it on the ground:
Then bending o'er it, chaunts a dirge,
And piles the turf around.

Prince of Humanity, thy fears †
Are juſt—thy ſon is dead,
But England's duſt, not ocean's wave,
Conceals the ſtranger's head.

He came, with confidence and joy
Her welcome pleas'd ſhe gave—
With ſweet ſimplicity he charm'd,
Then ſunk into the grave.

Then wither'd all his father's hopes
And all his country's fame,
Then fled a ſoul which, ev'n in death,
Confeſs'd a patriot's flame.

---

* Their funeral rites, as deſcribed by Mr. Keate, correſpond with the above account.

† This amiable youth, whoſe gentleneſs and penetration endeared him to all who ſaw him, died of the ſmall pox ſoon after his arrival in England.

His powerleſs but impaſſion'd wiſh,
His lov'd Pelew rejoin'd,
To tell that England was good place,†
And Engliſh very kind.

Far from his country, kindred, ſire,
His tomb affection rears,‡
Graves with his name the votive ſtone,
And bathes it with her tears.

There, as ſhe paints uncultur'd worth
And unaffected grace,
She ſhames the boaſts of letter'd pride,
And Europe's poliſh'd race.

Mild, uncorrupt, tho' unadorn'd,
The natives of Pelew
Preſent the portrait of an heart,
To artleſs goodneſs true.

---

† His dying words.

‡ The Hon. Eaſt India Company expreſſed their gratitude to his father, by placing an handſome inſcription over his grave.

In ſophiſtry's deep maze unlearn'd,
In ſtudious lore untaught,
They only know the uſeful law
Of acting as they ought.

In happy ignorance of all
The ills of poliſh'd life,
That wealth, which arms the midnight foe,
And lures the faithleſs wife.

Firm, not ferocious, brave, ſincere,
Induſtrious, and content,
In ſcenes of inoffenſive toil
Their blameleſs lives are ſpent.

And will not heav'n, for them, uncloſe
Her golden gates of light?
Will not the God, to them unknown,
The life he loves requite?

Will not the Saviour, whom they ne'er
Were call'd on to confeſs,
The charity himſelf enjoins
With promis'd glory bleſs?

Faith's precious ray, by Nature's light,
But partially ſupplied,
Will their juſt Maker claim of them
The talent he denied?

Hence be the narrow mind, that views
The ſavage with diſdain,
Hence be the arrogance, that dares
To limit mercy's reign.

For ever open are thy doors,
Thou city of our God!
By every people, kindred, tongue,
Shall thy large courts be trod.

Then controverſial pride ſhall meet
The brother he diſown'd,
And ſee the children of the South
With Abraham's ſons enthron'd.

Then ſhall philanthropy tranſcend
Their ſyſtematic plan:
And only truth and goodneſs give
Pre-eminence to man.

The PETITION

OF THE

ROSES.

To a FRIEND in IRELAND.

THE new blown Roſes to their friend,
Long abſent, a petition ſend.
Now when thy groves redundant wear
The vernal garland of the year,
'Mongſt whom the inſect tribes of ſpring
Inceſſant ply the buſy wing;
Oh! ſay; what charm, what magic power,
Keeps thee from thy Arcraſian bower.*

* The Bower of Bliſs.—*See Fairy Queen.*

Long ſince you paſs'd, with eager haſte,
Rude Cambria's mountain-piled waſte,
Which, like the hills in Claſſic ground,
Were wont with choral harps to ſound.
The theme, the deeds of chieftains bold,
Thoſe hills now dreary, mute, and cold,
You left and launch'd upon the tide,
Whoſe waves the ſiſter iſles divide.
Fearleſs you brav'd the wintry blaſt,
Which howling ſhook the rocking maſt.
Luxùrious, uncontroll'd, and gay,
You ſaw Ierne meet the day,
And, like a lover, ſtrive to keep
His chariot from the Atlantic ſteep.
O'er many a marſh and barren moor,
In legend fam'd, you paſs'd ſecure
To where, through Munſter's lakes and bowers,
His world of waters Shannon pours.
Hither with patient zeal you ſped,
But not by roving humour led:
You went to eaſe the anxious cares,
Which preſs'd a matron's ſilver hairs.

You went, to her endear'd careſs
To give the happy ſon you bleſs,
By filial piety to prove
At once your merit and your love.
You ſought, tho' with miſtaken aim,
To cheriſh Nature's languid flame.
You knew not, rapture's high-wrought ſtrife
Breaks the fine filaments of life.
Yet ſeek no more, by fond complaint,
To ſtay the venerable ſaint.
Short gleams of bliſs on earth is giv'n,
'Tis only permament in heav'n.
Her virtue, by long conflicts prov'd,
Fits her to meet the God ſhe lov'd.
The ſacred relicts of the juſt
Giv'n to the grave in holy truſt,
And every pious right fulfill'd,
That faith enjoin'd, or love impell'd,
Oh! come and taſte, with mind ſerene,
The beauties of the rural ſcene,
The fearleſs crocus, Flora's king,
Led forth the army of the ſpring.

Then, bold with wintry winds to fight,
The ſnowdrop ſpread her banners white.
The hyacinth, of tender form,
To ſoothe the anger of the ſtorm,
Expos'd her beauty fair and frail,
And died before the ruthleſs gale.
The coward ſhrubs, at diſtance far,
Beheld, nor durſt provoke the war,
Till May, attir'd in robes of green,
Demanded homage as their queen.
Then firſt the lilack gave to view
Her mantle of imperial blue.
Then the laburnum, tribute paid,
In vegetable gold array'd.
Syringa, like the lilly pale,
Diffus'd her fragrance to the gale.
The woodbine hung her vines above
To liſten to the linnets love.
Unprais'd, unnotic'd, by thy eye,
Theſe early bloſſoms fade and die.
True to their 'cuſtom'd ſeaſon, ſee
The Roſes load the bending tree.

Shall we too ſeek our annual tomb,
Nor in thy moſs-deck'd baſket bloom?
Nor thron'd upon thy boſom ſhew
Our richly variegated glow?
Thy taſte is wanting to diſpoſe
The foliage, that redundant grows.
Ah! do not thy return delay,
'Till winter whitens every ſpray,
'Till none of all our hoarded ſweets
Thy morning walk with incenſe greets:
And Flora muſt thy garland chuſe
From aconite and ſolemn yews.
Oh! haſte, while ſummer's fleecy clouds
Float gently o'er the ſwelling ſhrouds.
Let not thy vent'rous bark again
Encounter the autumnal main.
Death, when the ſtormy Centaur raves,
Prepares his numerous wat'ry graves,
And leads his cypreſs-crowned hoſt
Triumphant round Icrne's coaſt.

Oh! haſte, thy anxious friends rejoin,
(For many an anxious friend is thine)
The terrors of the ſtormy ſea
And craggy rocks they dread for thee.
Thy ſmile is wanting to endear
The full luxuriance of the year;
What time the dancing lunar beam
Sheds o'er the grove a ſilver gleam;
When Nature takes a ſofter hue,
Her flowing veſt impearl'd with dew,
While liſt'ning to the night-bird's ſong,
They lack the muſic of thy tongue;
If thy lov'd flowers unheard complain,
Yet Friendſhip ſhall not aſk in vain.
Thy groves in welcome ſhall renew
The early ſummer's ſofteſt hue.
Come then, return, with rapture taſte
The pleaſures in retirement plac'd.
Again thy tranquil hours ſhall glide
Calm, as the riv'let by thy ſide.
Virtue alone theſe joys ſhall claim,
And thou and virtue art the ſame.

TO THE

Hon. Mrs. C——E,

C——E, whom providence hath plac'd
In the rich realms of poliſh'd taſte,
Where judgement penetrates to find
The treaſures of the unwrought mind,
Where converſation's ardent ſpirit
Refines from droſs the ore of merit,
Where emulation aids the flame
And ſtamps the ſterling buſt of fame.
Can you, accuſtom'd to behold
The pureſt intellectual gold,

Where genius ſheds its living rays,
Bright as the ſunny diamond's blaze,
Like idle Virtuoſio deign
To pick up pebbles from the plain?
Pleas'd, if the worthleſs flints pretend
Fantaſtic characters to blend.
Theſe in your cabinet inſert,
And real excellence deſert.
Juſt, the compariſon will be,
If you ſuppoſe the pebble me.
My verſe, inelegant and crude,
Confus'd in ſenſe, in diction rude.
You, not content with praiſing, ſpout
To friends of faſhion at a rout.
You ſaid the author was a charmer,
Self taught, and married to a farmer;
Who wrote all kind of verſe with eaſe,
Made pies and puddings, frocks and cheeſe,
Her ſituation, tho' obſcure,
Was not contemptible or poor.
Her converſation ſpoke a mind
Studious to pleaſe, but unrefin'd.

So warm an intereſt you expreſs'd,
It was not poſſible to jeſt.
The company amaz'd, perplex'd,
Wondering what whim would ſeize you next,
Perhaps expecting you would praiſe
The muſe of Quarles, or Sternhold's lays,
Stammer'd, as due to complaiſance,
The civil ſpeech of non-chalance.
But at the inſtant you withdrew,
The converſation turn'd on you.
The ſonnet might perhaps have merit,
You had recited it with ſpirit.
Your manner was ſo full of grace,
They could not judge in ſuch a caſe.
But give each character its due,
You ſeem'd a little partial too.
All, to commend your taſte, agreed—
But friendſhip would the beſt miſlead.
A warm enthuſiaſtic heart
Would ſoon be wrought upon by art.
The Poem—tho', indeed, no wonder
Th' uneducated Muſe ſhould blunder,

Had here, and there, a ſmall defect,
But 'twere invidious to object.
One thought aliteration fine,
And lik'd it every other line.
Another, might ſhe be ſo free
Would ſubſtitute—a that for the.
A third ſaid, judges will perceive,
Crown has a harſher ſound than wreath,
A witty beau obſerv'd, the nation
Had verſe enough for exportation,
Wiſh'd ladies would ſuch arts deſpiſe,
And truſt their conqueſts to their eyes.
For, on his honour, if the whim
Should ſpread, they'd be too wiſe for him,
A man of rank grew warm, and ſwore
The times were bad enough before.
He offer'd to bet ten to one,
The nation would be ſoon undone:
For honour ſpirit, courage, worth
We all a[illegible] birth;
And if the ruſtics grew refin'd,
Who would the humble duties mind.

They might, from ſcribbling odes and letters,
Proceed to dictate to their betters.
A fellow of a college ſaid,
He ſtudied nothing but the dead;
For men of ſenſe have ne'er denied
That learning with the ancients died.
A lady, of diſtinguiſh'd taſte,
Much ſtreſs on well-bred authors plac'd.
Tho' ſhe could never time beſtow
On traſh inelegant and low;
Yet ſcience was her darling paſſion,
And ſhe read every thing in faſhion.
With her a lovely nymph agreed,
That people ſhould with caution read:
And really, if ſhe muſt confeſs,
That what with viſiting and dreſs,
Muſic, her ever dear delight,
And cards, the buſineſs of the night,
Her leiſure was ſo very ſmall,
She could not ſay ſhe r[illegible] at all.
Oh! that the great ones would condeſcend
Such treatment to ſuch verſe as mine,

Adapted but to entertain
A partial friend or ſimple ſwain.
Yet, with a votry's ardent zeal,
The ſorrows of the Muſe I feel.
While Painting, for her ſons can claim
At once emolument and fame;
While Muſic, when ſhe ſtrikes the chord,
Confers diſtinction and reward;
Contemptuous ſcorn, or cold regard,
Awaits the heaven-illumin'd Bard.
No more ſhall wealth, with foſtering care,
Fair poeſy's frail bloſſoms rear.
No more ſhall favour's influence bland
Bid the luxuriant growth expand.
No more ſhall candid judgement deign
That wild luxuriance to reſtrain.
No more ſhall chiefs, in arms renown'd,
Sue by the Muſes to be crown'd.
Neglected, while the wintry ſtorm
Tears the fine fibres of its form.

As if disdaining to complain
Of patronage, implor'd in vain,
It withering droops its lovely head,
And sinks upon its native bed;
Mourn'd only by the lib'ral few——
I mean the counterparts of YOU.

To. Miſs C——E,

WITH THE ADVENTURES OF THE

Six Princeſſes of Babylon.

A KING, dear Matilda, in Babylon reign'd;
'Tis a fabulous legend I quote—
Six daughters he had whom a Fairy maintain'd;
Then Fairies were people of note.
Of droll Robin Goodfellow often you've heard,
Benigna was one of his ſort;
But wiſdom and virtue by her were conferr'd—
Little Robin taught junkets and ſport.

Theſe 'foreſaid young ladies, obſerve they'd no brothers,
Were handſome as——ſtop, I've forgot;
I could mention their likeneſs if writing to others;
To you, I believe, I'd beſt not.
Now the Fairy, regardleſs of beauty and birth,
Bade them only in virtue ſeek fame,
For rank ſhe affirm'd was enobled by worth,
And I know your Mamma ſays the ſame.

In an elegant grotto, ſequeſter'd and cool,
Long time ſhe her pupils did teach:
But when they were old enough all to quit ſchool,
She allotted a journey to each.
Miranda was clever—I doubt ſhe was idle,
So the Fairy, that fault to reſtrain,
For diſcipline bad inclinations will bridle,
Deſir'd her a diſtaff to gain.

What a princeſs to ſpin? I aſſure you I'm grave,
This diſtaff had powers would ſurprize you;
It was Induſtry call'd, health and riches it gave,
And to gain it I ſtrongly adviſe you.

The lady Floriſa poſſeſs'd a good heart,
But her temper her virtues obſcur'd;
She would often be ſullen, or anſwer ſo tart,
That her manners could ſcarce be endur'd.

Now her excellent governeſs knew of a river,
Which lay in a country far fam'd,
One draught of which courteous demeanour would give her,
Good Humour the river was named.
So the Fairy beſtow'd a gold bottle upon her,
And told her what courſe to purſue;
But when ſhe return'd, I declare on my honour,
I ſhould hardly have known her from you.

Clementina, in all the warm ardour of youth,
From the grotto exulting tripp'd forth,
Her charge was to fetch, from the genius of truth,
A ſpear of unparalleled worth.
Poor damſel full often ſhe met with miſchance,
By the magic of falſhood deceiv'd;
But firm reſolution procur'd her the lance,
The ſame you from Nature receiv'd.

By Bonetta the Mantle of meekneſs was worn,
Its whiteneſs the ſnow might expreſs;
It was bright as the luſtre that waits on the morn,
Don't you long for this elegant dreſs?
Allow me to mention one property more,
All who ſaw theſe fair dames did declare,
Though Bonetta was rather hard-featur'd before,
She now ſeem'd tranſcendantly fair.

Of narrow ſoul'd Avarice doubtleſs you've heard,
It is ſelfiſh, and odious, and mean;
Its contraſt, Profuſion, is raſh and abſurd,
But there lies a ſweet virtue between.
To prove it, when free from fictitious pretence,
A wonderful magnet was wrought;
This taliſman, ſacred to judgement and ſenſe,
By lovely Orinda was ſought.

Would you know her adventures at large, pray purſue her,
She gives a delightful narration;
It was found by a gallant young Knight, and brought to her
On a ſhield which he call'd Moderation.

Thus five of theſe ladies their wiſhes achiev'd,
At laſt your young name-ſake was ſent;
She too, from Benigna, a mandate receiv'd,
'Twas to fetch the white wand of Content.

Diſappointment, ingratitude, envy, and grief,
Did many a peril deviſe;
But a cherub, nam'd Innocence, brought her relief,
And with chearfulneſs gave her the prize.
And now to Benigna the travellers came,
The reward of their toils to receive;
She gave them, I know you will wiſh for the ſame,
Bright virtue's unperiſhing wreath.

Now was I a Fairy, I vow I would ſend
To Matilda this magical wealth;
But as I am not, I'll intreat my young friend
To try to acquire it herſelf.
The diſtaff, the mantle, the ſpear, and the wand,
The magnet, and river, ſo rare,
Your Mamma, my dear girl, has them all at command,
And can tell you at once where they are.

For the wreath which Benigna procur'd by her art,
You need not to Fairies appeal;
For the moment theſe qualities glow in your heart,
Your brow the bright cincture will feel.
To ſpeed your exertions, I'll tell you a truth,
Diſclos'd by Experience the ſage;
Without them you'll ne'er know the pleaſures of youth,
Nor the rational comforts of age.

EDMUND,

Surnamed

IRONSIDE.

A TRAGEDY.

Ambition—this ſhall tempt to riſe,
Then whirl the wretch from high
To bitter Scorn a ſacrifice
And grinning Infamy.

GRAY'S ODE ON ETON COLL.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

EDMUND, *King of England.*
CANUTUS, *King of Denmark.*
EDRICK, *Edmund's Brother.*
CEFRID, *Earl of Mercia.*
KENELM, *Engliſh Nobleman.*
TURKILL, HAROLD, } *Daniſh Noblemen.*
ALLWYNN, *Friend of Edrick,*

Britiſh and Daniſh Lords, Servants, *&c.*

WOMEN.

EMMA, *Queen Dowager*—Widow of Ethelred.
ELGIVA, *Queen of England.*
BIRTHA.

Scene, Glouceſter Caſtle and its Environs.

EDMUND IRONSIDE,

A Tragedy.

ACT I.

Scene I.—Glouceſter Caſtle Garden.

Enter EMMA and BIRTHA.

EMMA.

HERE diſtant from the cruel rage of war,
Securely placed in peaceful ſolitude,
We know but little of the gen'ral ſorrow.
Yon venerable grove of ſpreading oaks
Kindly immures this antiquated caſtle
From proud Ambition's eye. It ſeems to court
Neglected worth and ruin'd majeſty,
To fly for ſhelter here.

BIRTHA.

How my ſoul yearns,
As I contemplate, Britain, all thy ſufferings!

Here, nurs'd by Peace, the virtues lov'd to dwell.
Alas! how chang'd! now Diſcord yells aloud;
Murder and Rapine, Perjury and Fraud,
Her hated offſpring flouriſh.

EMMA.

Yet may Britain
Hope to regain her ancient happineſs.
E'er this brave Edmund, her avenging King,
(Who, for his ſtrength unequall'd, hath obtain'd
The name of *Ironſide*) attacks her foes.
O Birtha! Conqueſt muſt attend his cauſe,
Since Honor, rigid Juſtice, ſteady Courage,
Unite to draw his ſword.

BIRTHA.

Heroic Man!
Brave in diſtreſs! Wiſe in proſperity!
The grace—the glory of the Britiſh Kings!
His ſoul, diſdainful of the peace, his father
Inglorious Ethelred from Denmark purchas'd,
Awoke the ſlumbering virtue of his people,
And dar'd the Invader to the field of war.

EMMA.

The ſtern Canutus, Denmark's Victor Prince,
Our mortal foe, tho' deem'd unmatch'd in arms,
Trembles (as oft I've heard) at Edmund's name,
While ſcowling envy dims his alter'd eye.

BIRTHA.

E'en as the Sun with brighter luſtre ſeems
To paint the face of Nature, when compar'd

With the preceding tempeſt, ſo, great Edmund,
Thy virtues, weigh'd againſt thy Father's crimes,
Appear more graceful.

EMMA.

Stop, my gentle Birtha,
Nor curſe my huſband and thy Edrick's father.
Let Britain's foes dwell, with malicious joy,
On his diſaſtrous reign: a wife muſt weep
And huſh in reverent ſilence all his frailties.

BIRTHA.

Call'ſt thou him Huſband? Oh! that ſacred name,
Importing tendereſt guardianſhip and love,
Sat but ungraceful on your tyrant Lord.
Love, the kind union of conſenting ſouls,
Unnotic'd, at your Brother's harſh command
You mov'd to Hymen's altar: ſo of old,
Pale with her fears, with loath averted eye,
A ſacrifice, the virgin Victim came.

EMMA.

How hard, my Friend, the fate of thoſe who bear
The envied evil of diſtinguiſh'd birth!
Ne'er muſt they liſten to the potent call
Of fond Affection: Some deſigning Stateſman,
Frigid of ſoul, the dire alliance forms,
That gives ſuppos'd ſtability to Empire.
By ſuch as theſe was wretched Emma given
To Engliſh Ethelred. His arm they thought
Might ſuccour Normandy. The vain deſign
Heaven view'd with indignation: For my Brother
Liv'd to behold the Man, by whoſe aſſiſtance

He hoped to gain ſuch plenitude of power,
Fly to his Court, to ſave a hated life,
Scorn'd by his ſubjects and bereft of all.

BIRTHA.

The Duke relented then?

EMMA.

With many a tear
He bath'd my cheek, and claſping in his arms,
Wiſh'd he had given me to the man I lov'd,
Nor paid reſpect to aſking Majeſty.

BIRTHA.

Heard I aright? the man you lov'd.

EMMA.

Yes, Birtha!
My heart, tho' burſting with its ſecret woes,
Hath hid this ſorrow long.

BIRTHA.

Truſt, royal Emma,
My ſteadfaſt faith.

EMMA.

'Twere infamous to doubt
Truth long approv'd. Too well thou know'ſt the tears
My eyes have ſhed for Ethelred's hard uſage;
Nor e'er ſuppos'd Love, hopeleſs Love, increas'd
The copious flood. Oh! Birtha, blame me not,
Nor think I ſwerv'd from Duty's rigid laws.
Long e'er your Monarch led me to the altar,
I own'd my heart irrevocably gone.
Thou weep'ſt.

BIRTHA.

Oh! Miſery too like my own.

EMMA.

'Twas at the time the female heart firſt beats
With ſenſibility, e'er reaſon governs,
A noble Stranger ſought my Father's Court
By martial tilting call'd. His perſon, Birtha,
Spake graceful dignity, and ſeem'd a ſhrine
For mental excellence. In ev'ry ſport
Victor he ſhone. Methinks I now behold him,
The garland in his trembling hand, approach me:
He kneel'd and cried, "Accept, bright Maid, this token,
"'Tis all a giftleſs Stranger can beſtow,
"And due to thee, thou faireſt of the Fair!"
Oh! judge me not too harſhly, when I own,
I bluſh'd with pleaſure and receiv'd the prize.

BIRTHA.

Saw you him afterwards?

EMMA.

The Duke, my Father,
(Than whom none dearer priz'd a Soldier's name)
Pleas'd with his gallantry, requeſted much
His further ſtay. Thereto the Stranger Knight
Grateful aſſented; and by courteous manners
Won ev'ry heart. He ſoon of me obtain'd
A private conference, and implor'd my love,
Breathing the tendereſt vows. Ah! deareſt Friend,
Proſperity had made me idly gay.
Misfortune's gloomy melancholy night
I ne'er had known. I own'd my infant flame,
Fancying each envied happineſs my own.

BIRTHA.

Protect us! was he falſe?

EMMA.

His generous heart
Scorn'd every meanneſs, nor betray'd its truſt.
But then my Brother, by your Monarch won
To grant his ſuit, that hated union nam'd.
Can words expreſs my anguiſh? I confeſs'd
My ſecret choice. Then he aſſum'd the ſovereign—
Vow'd to abandon me to infamy—
Compell'd my gallant Love to fly his realm
On pain of death—confin'd me in a caſtle—
From thence releas'd to be a wretched bride.

BIRTHA.

Knew you the Knight's extraction?

EMMA.

Once he own'd
Himſelf derived from Daniſh Anceſtors,
Whoſe high achievements ſwell the trump of Fame.
This, tho' intreated much, was all he own'd;
Nor have I ſince beheld him.

BIRTHA.

Pardon, Lady,
My wonder, that ſuch juvenile regard
Lives ſtill unconquer'd in your prudent breaſt.

EMMA.

Birtha! the ſentiments we nurs'd in youth,
Howe'er romantic, on the mem'ry grav'd
Are ſcarce expung'd by ſtealing age. Our hearts,

Bold and rebellious, to the ruling mind
Pay ſcant allegiance. Coldly left to mourn
In ſolitude, that nurſe of tender woes,
Fancy, too buſy, ſharp'ned ev'ry pang,
By painting happineſs I might have known.

BIRTHA.

Unworthy Ethelred! he ſhould have tried,
By kind attention, to have won thy heart.
But ſouls, like his, ſcorn manly gentleneſs.
Cloſe wiles and guilty pleaſures lov'd his Court
Degenerate manners—Britain half-ſubdued—
The Daniſh maſſacre—the hateful tribute
To ev'ry diſtant age ſhall mark his name
With infamy.

EMMA.

Forgive him, he is dead!
Is not the mem'ry of th' unhappy ſacred?
Now change the converſe,—praiſe the royal Edmund
And thy dear Edrick, thy betrothed Lord.

BIRTHA.

I fear the Prince's truth.

EMMA.

Sweet Maid, he loves thee
With all the dotings of a gen'rous paſſion!

BIRTHA.

Alas! a temper, ſo reſerv'd and ſtern,
Scorns the weak yieldings call'd by Woman, Love.

EMMA.

'Tis true, of late, he ſhews ſome dang'rous ſigns
Of growing rancour. With diſtemper'd eye
He views all objects. Haſt thou not incens'd him
By cold indifference, or contemptuous ſcorn?

BIRTHA.

Too well he knows my eaſy heart his own,
And cruel ſcorns me as a fooliſh maid.
Whene'er we meet, no looks of tender love,
No gentle vows, eſcape him. His ſtern aſpect
Beſpeaks a mind intent on deſp'rate ſchemes.
Anon he ſtarts,—utters disjointed words——
Then leaves me trembling with uncertainty.
Heavens! ſhould his thoughts aſpire to Britain's throne,
What muſt loſt Birtha ſuffer.

EMMA.

Dire ſuggeſtion!
O thou Eternal! 'tween the princely youths
Let laſting concord reign. For this, before
Yon altar, witneſs to my daily vows,
Humbly I'll ſupplicate. The Queen approaches——
Sooth her my Birtha with thy gentle love,
Her fears for Edmund border on diſtraction.

Exit Emma.

BIRTHA.

Fears ſhe for Edmund's life? My harraſs'd breaſt
Throbs with more horrid bodings.

Scene II.

Enter ELGIVA.

Royal Mourner,
Yet turn, yet lift, thy melancholy eyes;
Think of the victories that grace thy Lord,
And let the thought breathe comfort to thy ſoul.

ELGIVA.

Talk not of comfort, for my ſoul is griev'd
By long ſuſpence. No tidings yet from Edmund.
The moon has wax'd and wan'd ſince laſt we parted,
In war for ſpeed he uſed to imitate
The darting lightning. If ſucceſs were ours,
The welcome tidings had been ſoon deſpatched
To ſtay my tears.—He's dead.

BIRTHA.

Suppreſs that thought.
Rumour, thou know'ſt, is ſwift to tell miſchance.
A braver band ne'er grac'd a Monarch's train
Than that thine Edmund leads—all veteran troops,
Or the fair flower of young Nobility.

ELGIVA.

His value juſtifies my fears. Ah! Friend,
The Dane is Fortune's fav'rite; Edmund worn
By long adverſity—Heavens! ſhould he periſh,
Is there no poor Aſylum to receive
His wretched Widow and his infant Son,

Where, undiſturb'd by Denmark, grief may waſte
This hated life? No, Birtha, there is none.
The Father's enemies, with rancorous hate,
Purſue the orphan babe,—he too muſt periſh.
Heard you a noiſe?

BIRTHA.

Methinks the gates uncloſe
Again.—A trumpet.

ELGIVA.

From the King—alas!
My knees relax,—thy hand.

BIRTHA.

A Warrior arm'd
Hath paſs'd the outworks, and the ſoldiers hail him
With martial honours.

ELGIVA.

We will meet him too.
Spirit of comfort ſit upon his lips,
Give him to ſpeak of Virtue's well earn'd palms;
And Britain's peace bought by her Monarch's ſword.

Exit.

Scene III. **Before the Caſtle.**

Enter KENELM, meeting an Officer.

KENELM.

How fares our royal Miſtreſs Elgiva?

OFFICER.

Oh! if thou bring'ſt intelligence of Edmund,
Thou art thrice welcome. Since he went to battle,

Soft ſleep forſakes her eye, and ev'ry charm
Flies from her fading face. Are we victorious?

KENELM.

Look round the Caſtle: 'Tis brave Edmund's all.
Our cauſe is deſp'rate. Now no feeble ray
Of glimmering hope, unleſs the Mercian Cefrid
Should bring his vaſſals inſtantly to ſtop
The Victor's march. But age unnerves his frame,
Will he reſume his long neglected arms
To wage unequal war? or wake the fury
Of ſuch a foe as Denmark?

OFFICER.

Gracious Heaven,
Pity our wretched nation!

KENELM.

Doubly man
The outworks. Careful watch, leſt rude ſedition
Should enter here. Treaſon will now grow common,
And practiſe villanies our Anceſtors
Would bluſh to think. Oh! Friend, I bring ſuch tidings!
But ſpeedily conduct me to the Queen.

OFFICER.

Behold with eager wildneſs ſhe appears.

Scene IV.

Enter ELGIVA and BIRTHA.

ELGIVA.

How fares the King?

KENELM.

He lives.

ELGIVA.

He lives! 'Tis well.
But yet thy pallid cheek, thy down-caſt eye,
Reveal a truth as terrible as Death.
Lives he a priſoner?

KENELM.

No.

ELGIVA.

Why tremble ſtill?
I fear thou'lt tell of Fame and Empire loſt,
Blaz'ning the diſadventurous chance of war.
But bleſt for ever be the Hand divine,
That from the rage of battle ſav'd my Lord.

BIRTHA.

Where was the combat?

KENELM.

On the Coaſt of Eſſex
The rivals met. Stern War from youth I've known—
Never till then her gloomieſt terrors ſaw.
For Freedom, Britain toil'd; for Rapine, Denmark

Moſt fiercely fought, like wolves by hunger urg'd
To climb the fold. Their King in ſable arms
The ſquadrons led. Britain, 'neath Edmund's care
Defied his rage. Edmund, e'er great in war,
With ſteady courage ſhining in his eye,
Agile and ſtrong, wielded the battle-axe,
Broke the cloſe ranks, and thinn'd the affrighted foe.

ELGIVA.

Oh! he was ever thus.

KENELM.

Succeſs appear'd
To join our cauſe, when Edrick——

BIRTHA.

Was he ſlain?
Juſt in the heat of battle did his death
Force hov'ring victory to join the Dane?
O gallant Hero!

KENELM.

Shame be on his brow,
Reproach and Infamy attend his name
To ev'ry age! The Prince was falſe.

BIRTHA.

Was falſe?

KENELM.

Was falſe to Edmund.

ELGIVA.

To Edmund? to the Brother of his ſoul,
Endear'd by Friendſhip, Kindred, Gratitude?

It cannot be! Edrick deſert his Brother——
His godlike Brother—and cou'd Heaven permit it?
Huſh'd be each impious thought; I am reſign'd.
Juſt, tho' inſcrutable, are all thy ways!
Birtha, thou weep'ſt. Oh! if he be a traytor,
His perfidy and thy unſullied truth
Muſt ne'er unite.

BIRTHA.

No! I will greatly ſcorn him,
Deteſt, deſpiſe the wretch! Proceed Lord Kenelm.

KENELM.

Soon as the King th' appointed ſignal gave
To chaſe the Dane, his troops, as if inſpired
With one infernal ſoul, againſt their Brethren
Turn'd their perfidious ſwords. Deſcription fails
To tell our horrors: for the flying foe
Perceiv'd the tumult, ſtopp'd and hem'd us round
With certain death. Then what a ſcene enſued!
Our nobleſt bled, the old with bruiſed arms
From former battles 'ſcap'd—youth juſt beginning
To wield the ſword, heaps pil'd on heaps they lay.
Oh! my poor ſuffering Friends.

ELGIVA.

How bore my Lord
The ſhocking ſight?

KENELM.

Ah! Lady, had you ſeen him.
The big ſharp tear rolled rapid from his eye
O'er his pale hollow cheek. His martial air

Was loſt. His nerveleſs hand dropp'd from its graſp
The uſeleſs weapon. Deep, loud, ceaſeleſs groans
Burſt from his lab'ring breaſt.

ELGIVA.

Why was I diſtant!
I would have claſp'd him in my faithful arms,
And ſooth'd his deep deſpair.

KENELM.

Perfidious Edrick,
To cloſe his crimes, perceiving 'mongſt the ſlain
A form like Edmund's, ſever'd from the corſe
The gory head, which lifting on a ſpear
He cry'd aloud—Britons, behold your King!
Then ſunk each heart—to fly they feebly ſtrove—
Few 'ſcap'd. The injur'd King with tears I woo'd
To ſave his life. He cried, the World was baſe,
And he would leave it; 'till I nam'd his Queen——
Thereat his ſlow unwilling ſtep he turn'd.
His faithful guard with lifted bucklers ſcreen'd
Their ſacred charge, and thro' th' aſſaulting foe
Hew'd with their ſwords a way. Oft turn'd the King,
Scorning retreat. As oft I graſp'd his arm
And begg'd him for his Queen and Country's ſake
To deign to live.

BIRTHA.

Where ſtays he now?

KENELM.

That night
He ſent me to collect ſome ſcatter'd troops.
That done, to meet him here.

ELGIVA.

Shall I behold him?
O join my friends! let us intreat the King
To leave the Realm to Denmark, and preſerve
In ſome ſecure retreat a life ſo ſacred.

KENELM.

Alas! my Queen; a ſpirit, great as Edmund's,
Will rather meet undaunted the fierce ſhock
Of fell Adverſity, than ſhun her fury.——
What means that ſhout?

ELGIVA.

Again the trumpet ſounds.
Oh! tranſport, Birtha, ſee my Lord appears.

BIRTHA.

I muſt avoid him. Edrick thou haſt ſham'd me;
Forc'd me to wear a bluſh in Virtue's ſight.
Let me retire and weep in ſolitude.

Exit Birtha.

Scene V.

Enter EDMUND.

ELGIVA.

Thou, whom my ſoul for many tedious days
Hath ſadly mourn'd—my life, my Edmund, welcome!
Oh! be not ſad; forget thy wrongs awhile.

And to the Father and the Huſband give
The preſent hour.

EDMUND.

Can I forget my wrongs?
My only treaſure! ſince we met, this heart
Hath been bereav'd of all its deareſt hopes.
Edrick perfidious.—Sure this world's a ſtage
For treach'ry to beguile in Friendſhip's form;
And foul Ingratitude to wound unpuniſh'd.
The hopeful mother, when ſhe hears my wrongs,
Will view her foſter'd infant with ſuſpicion,
Leſt it ſhould prove her bane.

ELGIVA.

A faithleſs Brother!
A haughty Conqueror! A ruin'd Country!
Are ſubjects worthy of a Hero's tears.
Give me thy ſorrows, Edmund, let me bear them.

EDMUND.

Thou bear them, ſweet one! they would weigh thee dowr
Miſery hath mark'd me for her eldeſt born,
And given me all her hoard of wretchedneſs.

ELGIVA.

Oft has my Lord confeſs'd the lab'ring ſwain
More bleſt than he. Chooſe thou his humble lot.
Lo! Cambria's neighbouring hills, which rapine ne'er
Sought to invade, will ſhield thee from thy foes.
Her King though rude of ſpeech, with honeſt joy,
Will meet thy worth, and in thy quarrel arm.

There (ſhould ſucceſs again deſert thy ſword)
May we not ſhelter: there ſecurely dwell
With healthful exerciſe and calm delight.
Time's lenient hand ſhall ſoften all thy cares,
Nor e'en the mem'ry of thy raviſh'd Crown
Awake regret.

EDMUND.

O that I ne'er had worn it!
Then, the rude buſineſs of the battle o'er,
I might have liv'd.

ELGIVA.

Art thou reſolv'd to die?

EDMUND.

A Monarch lives but in his country's glory.
What means the envi'd title—Royalty?
Is it to ſmile, when Fortune ſmiles? to lead
A band of ſycophants array'd in purple?
Is it to feaſt with luxury? to riot
In courtly pleaſures?—Call'ſt thou this a King?
When with exulting Majeſty he moves,
And bends his arched brows in fancy'd greatneſs.
Theſe perilous times demand ſevere exertions.
The thought of law-givers—the fire of heroes—
The ſtateſman's care—the ſoldier's toil, muſt all
Center in me; and as I guard my birthright,
Chill Death alone ſhall pluck it from my graſp.

ELGIVA.

Is this thy purpoſe? wherefore then eſcape
The rage of war? Why juſt relieve my ſoul

From all its fears, with golden rays of hope?
Then leave me to deſpair.

EDMUND.

Oh! plead no more.
E'er long the Dane, crimſon'd with Britiſh ſlaughter,
Will ſeek this Caſtle—now my little all.
But here my arm ſhall guard thee; my heart's blood
Buy thee a reſpite from the victor's power.
True to the laſt for Elgiva I'll die.

ELGIVA.

Wilt thou? Oh! torture.

EDMUND.

Kenelm, truſty friend,
Marſhal the ſoldiers, leaſt the wily foe
Surprize us unprepar'd. Weep not, my love——
But let us fill this tranſient pauſe of fate
With generous deeds and fortitude of ſoul.
So ſhall the Victor Dane with bluſhes own,
Succeſs is not the ſure reward of Virtue.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Scene I.—A Field.

Enter EDRICK and ALLWYN,

EDRICK.

Allwyn, the Daniſh trumpet thrice hath ſounded,
And the tired army halts. The King intends
Here to encamp. Be thine th' intruſted care
T' intrench the Britiſh forces on the left,
At ample diſtance. When the weary Danes
Repair with ſleep the waſte of labour, then,
Cloſe by the covert of that ſhadowy wood,
Conduct thy troops to the extremeſt bound
Of yonder caſtle. There await my orders.

ALLWYN.

Mean you, with theſe, t'achieve the final ruin
Of your unhappy brother?

EDRICK.

No! my views
Lie deeper far. Thou know'ſt the prize that fires me:
Thy regal honours, England! Theſe to gain,
I hazard future bliſs and preſent comfort.
Had Edmund driven out Denmark, e'er he died,
His infant Son had reign'd: This I prevented.
Now (having gain'd his pardon firſt by tears)
My power muſt be employ'd t'o'erthrow Canutus.
Meantime ſome happy ſtratagem may reach

The life of Edmund. Then muſt Britain, girt
With war, reject an Infant's feeble rule,
And crave a martial Lord: And who than Edrick
More fit to wield the ſceptre and the ſword?
The Danes approach. We muſt not ſeem conſulting:
Away—be wiſe, ſecret, and vigilant.

Exeunt.

Scene II.—The Daniſh Army.

Enter HAROLD, TURKILL, and Lords.

HAROLD.

Erect the royal Standard on the ſlope
Of this declining hill. See, Friends, yon Caſtle!
Doth it not proudly ſeem to threat our force?
There, certain ſpies inform us, the fall'n Edmund
Hath fled for ſafety. May we not expect
To-morrow's ſun will terminate our toil,
And crown our great Canutus, King of England?

FIRST LORD.

Edmund was once moſt terrible in arms;
But, like th' autumnal meteor, now he lies
Shorn of his lucid glories—whilſt Canutus,
Bright as the noon-day ſun, claims from the world
Reſpectful admiration. Kingdoms, States,
(That never heard of Edmund) ſhall intreat
His powerful friendſhip. Thou, Lord Turkill, oft
Enjoy'ſt his ſocial converſe: Tell us, how
He bore the proſperous turn of fate at Aſhdown.

TURKILL.

With tears he met it: nor has ſince appear'd
To taſte repoſe or joy. Oft will he curſe
Perfidious Edrick, and bids Heaven reward him
With vain remorſe and conſtant diſcontent.
Then will he pity Edmund, and confeſs
He envies his exalted excellence;
Owns that his Rival's worth hath ſtill compell'd him
To hard achievements, leaſt the world ſhould think
His fame eclips'd by his competitor.
Oft he appears enrapt in penſive thought:
Then will he ſtart and cry,—Can I enjoy
The profit, yet eſcape the ſhame of Treaſon?
Impoſſible! Then will his boſom heave
As if to burſting.

HAROLD.

'Tis too nicely argued.
Let Infamy ſit dark on Edrick's brow;
Renown encircles his, and ſhall for ever.
Who is this Edmund? This all famous King?
Is he not Son to perjur'd Ethelred;
Who, ſcorning pity, Heaven, repeated vows,
Bath'd in the blood of Danes his ruthleſs hands?
Oh! what a hateful deed: I ſaw it all.
The conduits flow'd with blood: the duſky air
Was fill'd with notes of woe, the horrid ſhrieks
Of thoſe in torture—ſympathizing groans
Of ſad ſurvivors: Burning piles diſplay'd
A gloomy light, to ſhew the heaps of ſlain

That ſtrew'd the earth, to rav'ning wolves conſign'd.
The tale ſtill draws my tears.

TURKILL.

Juſt is thy grief.
'Twas an infernal deed! Our nobleſt Danes
Relying on the League, then juſt confirm'd
By either King, peaceful in Britain ſtaid:
But e'er our veſſels reach'd their native ſhore,
The faithleſs Monarch to deſtruction doom'd
The unoffending ſojourners.

HAROLD.

Oh! Turkill,
It mocks deſcription, to relate what deaths
The wretch contriv'd! As if he ne'er had heard
Of mild Compaſſion's heavenly tenderneſs.
To die with eaſe was mercy, and 'twas all
Gunilda's worth procur'd. I ſaw her ſuffer.
Bravely magnanimous ſhe climb'd the ſcaffold,
Then crimſon'd with her ſons and huſband's blood,
Tho' given as hoſtages of Denmark's faith,
Suſtain'd by Fortitude divine, ſhe died.
Theſe were her lateſt words: "Inhuman Murderer!
"Tho' now thou triumph'ſt, tremble when my Brother
"Makes inquiſition for my blood."

Firſt LORD.

She ſpake
Prophetical.

HAROLD.

Meagre, afflicting Famine,
And livid Peſtilence, moſt fiercely drew

Death's ebon car! Strange ſights were ſeen in Heaven;
Armies in thick array, with ported ſpears—
Awful preſage! Pale ſpectres, ſhrieking loud,
Slid thro' the midnight gloom! The ſand was mark'd
With drops of blood. Earthquakes, portentous comets,
Predicted times of wond'rous miſery.

TURKILL.

Our King, the furious Swayne, vindictive came.
Then, for each murder'd Dane, ten Britons bled,
England ſtill feels his wrath. Neglected orphans—
Thin-peopled cities—ruin'd villages—
Decaying palaces—uncultur'd fields,
Mark it the empire of Calamity!

HAROLD.

But ſee the King. His troubled aſpect ſhews
A mind at variance with itſelf. Let's meet him
With ſhouts of gratulation.

Scene III.

Enter CANUTUS.

Hail! Canutus,
Nobleſt of Men, of Monarchs, hail!

CANUTUS.

I thank you.
O that my future deeds may juſtify
This founding acclamation! Do thou, Harold,
Encamp thy horſe upon yon hill. Our foe
Expects aſſiſtance from the Earl of Mercia;

Watch thou and intercept it. Go, brave Oſwald,
Reſtrain the fury of the foragers. *Exit Harold.*
Command them on their peril not to ſnatch,
Without due recompence, the little ſtore
Of frugal Induſtry. I would to Heaven
Our moderation might remove the ſhame
That hangs on our ſucceſs!—I am a King,
Yet but a ſlave to paſſion; my big heart *Exit Lords.*
Sinks at this proſpect. O'er yon grove of oaks
The Caſtle raiſes its majeſtic turrets.
Beauty and Virtue conſecrate thoſe groves.
There ſaint-like Emma gives to holy rites
Her widow'd hours. Make her your deareſt charge,
Celeſtial Guardians!

TURKILL.

Canſt thou thus commend
Th' inconſtant Fair.

CANUTUS.

Too well thou know'ſt the power
Of fierce conſtraint o'er timid gentleneſs.
A threat'ning brother—painful ſolitude—
No ſoothing Friend—Abſence—Impriſonment
Conſpired to force conſent; her heart, I truſt,
Reluctant ſtill.

TURKILL.

Knew ſhe your high deſcent?

CANUTUS.

No! I conceal'd it; for, between our States,
Inveterate hate was fix'd. Beſides I wiſh'd
To gain poſſeſſion of her dear eſteem

Without Ambition's lure: This I effected.
More artleſs than the blooming ſhepherdeſs,
With bluſhing ſweetneſs, ſhe confeſs'd her paſſion.
My heart, tho' form'd of rugged elements,
Here feels a weakneſs. Turkill, I ador'd her.
Bereft of her, I loſt my taſte of life.
Which now deſpiſing, in tumultuous war
With reckleſs haſte I plung'd.

TURKILL.

Can love, my Liege,
Awake diſtractions in a Hero's breaſt?

CANUTUS.

O Friend! in ſouls like mine, tho' never form'd
For mean intreaty, it aſſumes moſt power.
Till I beheld her, Beauty ne'er allur'd
My ſteady heart; nor had it vanquiſh'd then,
But that the winning ſweetneſs of her manners
Gave it a power beyond itſelf. Yes, Turkill,
Without her, Britain is ſubdued in vain.
Reſtleſs, diſpleas'd, from joy to joy I turn,
And find a loath'd ſatiety in all.

TURKILL.

Aſſert thy love. Yon Caſtle holds the Queen.
At thy command, thy troops will climb the walls,
And make her keep her long neglected vows.

CANUTUS.

'Twere ſacrilege. No, Venerable Pile!
Your ſacred groves ſhall never be invaded.
No ruffian hand ſhall raſe your walls. The ſpot,
That holds my Emma, is for ever ſacred.
Force ſhall not ſeize the treaſure love denies.

TURKILL.

Doſt thou reſign her then?

CANUTUS.

No, Heav'n forefend!
Be thine the care, ere the ſun climbs high noon,
To ſeek thoſe turrets, and addreſs the Queen.
Plead with endearing eloquence my cauſe.
Tell her, I proffer her my Heart and Crown:
Tell her I love—for, oh! ſhe rules my fate.
Yet recollect my ſovereign dignity,
Nor force my bluſhes by thy mean ſubmiſſion.
Try her my Friend. Say firſt,—Canutus loves,
And courts her hand: If ſhe rejects thy ſuit,
Preſent this picture—watch her alt'ring look;
Then, when the varying colour glows and fades,
Shew her this ring, the pledge of tender vows.
Twice ſeven long years ago, in Normandy,
The yielding Fair beſtow'd it.

TURKILL.

I obey.

Exit Turkill.

CANUTUS.

If with falſe ſcorn, or womaniſh diſdain,
She treats thy pray'r—(by conſcious honour taught
To drive her image from my ſoul) in war,
Nobly I'll ſhine and dare heroic acts,
'Till dying Edmund, to my graſp, reſigns
The long conteſted Crown, as valour's meed,
Not the light gift of undiſcerning Fortune.

Scene IV.

Enter HAROLD.

Cefrid, my Lord, already has obtain'd
Admiſſion in the Caſtle. So Prince Edrick
Informs me. He requeſts to be admitted
To pay obeiſance.

CANUTUS.

Ha! what wants the traitor?
Down, ſwelling heart! I muſt conceal reſentment.

Enter EDRICK.

Oh! thou, whoſe more than mortal worth conſtrains
All hearts to lowly rev'rence, ſuffer Edrick
To pay, on bended knee, his vow'd allegiance.

CANUTUS.

Sir, ever pleaſed to call the brave our friend,
We wave the ceremonious forms of homage.

EDRICK.

A heart, by wonder and eſteem, compell'd:
A zeal, to ſerve your cauſe, by none exceeded,—
Is all my little wealth. The brilliant luſtre
Of your fair virtues drew my wond'ring eye.
The cords of brotherhood I quickly broke,
To lay me at your feet—intreat your favour;
Which granted, Nature's deareſt bond I'll cancel,
And live or die to ſerve you. Seems this ſtrange?

Friendſhip, by far, tranſcends the ties of blood
In truly gen'rous boſoms.

CANUTUS.

Much we thank you.—
Can Heav'n hear ſuch a wretch nor launch its thunder?
Aſide.

EDRICK.

My ſteady love on ev'ry danger drives me.
In yonder tow'rs the creſt-fall'n King collects
The thin remains of many a former battle:
Join'd, by the daring Mercian, he intends
To take the field; but there my covert wiles
Shall———

CANUTUS.

Brave and gallant ſoul! Tho' fore defeated,
Freſh and undaunted, he renews the charge.
To bear proſperity is poor applauſe:
But to endure the gloom of ſuch misfortunes,
Beſpeaks a mind too noble for deſpair.

EDRICK.

Since in the race of honour he hath loſt,
'Twere better far Edmund ſhould ceaſe debate,
And to the victor yield the toil'd-for Crown.
Thus to rebel 'gainſt Heaven's awarding hand,
Diſplays preſumption.

CANUTUS.

Think'ſt thou, Prince, to gain
My favour, by maligning Edmund's worth?

Haſt thou not robb'd him of his Crown and Glory?
Spare his good name, 'tis now the Hero's all.—
Perdition catch the wretch! I loath his preſence. *Aſide.*

Exit Canutus.

EDRICK.

Reproach from thee, proud Dane, whom by my crimes
I ſeem to ſerve! Beware—Revenge is mine. *Aſide.*
Would'ſt think, my Lord, this ſlight attempt of Edmund's
Could wake our Maſter's fear?

HAROLD.

All fear he ſcorns.
Fix'd as a laurel, whilſt the light'ning glares,
He ſtands 'mid dangers.

EDRICK.

So ſincere my love,
For him I'd venture deeds: Poſterity
Should ſcarce believe.

HAROLD.

Aſhdown records thoſe actions.
What canſt thou more?

EDRICK.

I know my Brother's temper;
Open and free, the qualities of fools,
Which ableſt heads can faſhion. Theſe I'll uſe:
Seek out his preſence—faſten on his knees—
So weep—condemn—confeſs, that in his heart

rill replace me; then tax all my power.
Denmark's good.

HAROLD.

Be that thy care, and truſt
King for thy reward.

EDRICK.

He promis'd me,
ſhdown battle, to exalt my ſtate
e the nobleſt Dane or proudeſt Briton.

HAROLD.

King reveres his oath, and honours Heaven.
ay, dread Prince, why lives ſuch enmity
:t you and Edmund? Rumour ſpeaks him noble
mper—ſweet in carriage—affable—
e,—a man that ev'ry grace adorns.

EDRICK.

nat believes report, is trick'd by Falſehood.
ſhe extols as if the ſons of Light.
ſhe defames. 'Tis whim and all caprice.
nd's her idol. I her ſcorn. Yet Edmund,
e, was moſt unjuſt for all my labours.
e requite me? Yes, he ſeiz'd the Earldom
gned me by my Sire.

HAROLD.

On what pretext?

EDRICK.

e demand of Cefrid's. True, my Father
gave it him, but for the boon required

Some ſmall achievements. When the Dotard pleaded
Conſcience—Religion: Such reply incens'd
My powerful father. The proud Earl he baniſh'd,
And grac'd me with his honours. I enjoy'd them;
Till on his death my Brother climb'd the Throne,
Who ſternly will'd me to reſign my claims.

HAROLD.

Did you obey?

EDRICK.

Aſtoniſhed,—I intreated,
Threat'ned, proteſted, rag'd, and ſtorm'd, in vain:
But ſince that hour, as miſers hug their gold,
I've treaſur'd my revenge. Doſt thou not think
The haughty King, when Britain, by my wiles,
Was girt with death, deplored the injury?

HAROLD.

He mourn'd, when round in heaps his ſoldiers fell.
Oh! 'twas a ſubject for a Monarch's tears!
E'en great Canutus ſtopp'd his mighty arm,
As if unwilling to increaſe his woe.

EDRICK.

Be that my taſk: my pleaſures are his pains.
Commend me to our Maſter, and aſſure him
Of my unſwerving faith. *Exit Edrick.*

HAROLD.

Advent'rous youth!
Go thou and proſper. For thy helliſh deeds,
With ample carnage, glut the Daniſh raven.

Exit.

Scene V. Glouceſter Caſtle.

Enter BIRTHA.

Haſt thou, O Miſery! torture more ſevere,
Than ſtill to love, to love one loſt to honour?
To dote, and yet deſpiſe; to glow with ſhame,
Hearing the deeds of him we idolize?
Such tortures rend my heart. Perfidious Edrick!
Why haſt thou ſham'd the promiſe of thy youth
By crimes, moſt horrid, moſt deteſtable?
Hypocriſy was deem'd of alien growth.
Oh! that its baleful foliage ſhould o'erſhade
The royal plant I nouriſh'd with ſuch care.

Enter EMMA.

Again in tears?

BIRTHA.

Never had wretch ſuch cauſe!

EMMA.

Yes, truſt me, millions! Thy unhappy country
Can furniſh numbers deſtitute and old,
Poor penſioners of icy Charity!
And ſhall the ſorrows of an ill-plac'd paſſion,
Compare with griefs like theirs?

BIRTHA.

Oh! ſpare me, Madam;
Th' unſtricken heart has licence to condemn.

EMMA.

Ah! Friend, did Emma number all the pangs
Her breaſt has felt, and honour them with tears:
'Twould furniſh converſe for a ſummer's day!
Tho' the ſharp ſting of grief decays by time,—
This heavy calm—this ſlumber of the ſoul—
This ſtupid, cold, indifferent apathy,
Time ne'er can conquer. So to ſtormy days,
When Autumn reigns, dull miſty nights ſucceed,
Uncheer'd with light of Moon or friendly Star.

BIRTHA.

Hard are the leſſons of Adverſity
To the weak minds of fragile womanhood.
Can'ſt thou, with all thy ſex's ſoftneſs fraught,
Learn the hard duty?

EMMA.

Birtha! have I not
Deſire of fame? Abhorrence of reproach?
A mind that ſeeks Eternity's applauſe?
A ſoul that pants for Immortality,
That med'cine for deſpair?

Enter a SERVANT.

Lady! from Denmark
A warlike Knight craves audience.

EMMA.

Ha! of me?
Well, let him come—'tis ſtrange what this imports.

Exit Servant.

Scene VI.

Enter TURKILL.

Hail Princeſs! happy, if thy will aſſents?
Canutus, Lord of many a potent realm,
Fortune's belov'd, the paragon of Virtue,
Reſigns the ſtyle, that ſuits a Conqueror,
To breathe the vows of heart-felt tenderneſs.
Charm'd, by your peerleſs fame, he nobly offers
His Hand, his Crown.

EMMA.

I thank the gen'rous Prince:
But oh! that Hand is ſtain'd with Britiſh blood;
That Crown is wreſted from great Edmund's brow.
And all the conqueſts, that attend his ſword,
Are bars affix'd, by Heaven, to part us wide.
He England's foe—I once of England, Queen,
The ſea and fire, forgetting antient hate,
May ſooner form a union.

TURKILL.

Think one moment,
Canutus, once rejected, ſcorns intreaty.
Your former ſtate avails not. See yon hill,
Black with the ſable garb of threat'ning war:
There Denmark's Sons intreat the promis'd fight,
Nor can this Caſtle long withſtand their pow'r.

EMMA.

Means then your King to claim his right of conqueſt,
And, when his captive, force me to ſubmiſſion?

Tell the proud Prince, while noble Edmund lives,
Britain diſclaims a conqueror. Say, that Emma,
Long uſed to adverſe Fortune, ſcorns the frowns
And threats of arrogant Proſperity.
I was the darling once of dazzling greatneſs!
But ſoon, illuſive as the dreams of morn,
She flitted hence, and left me to complain.
Ill fares the ſoul that loves ſuch tranſient good.
Mine ſoars above, it mocks the ſport of Fortune,
Alike uncertain in her hate and love.
Unhappy Ethelred was once a King,
Great and reſpected!

TURKILL.

Canſt thou him compare
To mighty Denmark? Fortune's but a name,
The brave and wiſe muſt e'er enſure ſucceſs,
By daring to deſerve. Our great Canutus
Erects his Empire on the ſureſt baſe.
Truſt me, the Britiſh Crown ſhall bind his brow
'Till icy Death approaches.

EMMA.

Plead no more.
To hearts, like mine, tir'd of life's changeful ſcene,
Grandeur, if permanent, could boaſt no charm.
Oh! would the Dane, if Heaven awards him Empire,
But yield me to retirement and my God;
Wrong'd as I am, by his victorious arm,
For him I'll pour forth daily oriſons.

TURKILL.

Talk of retirement, when the full blown roſe
Fades on thy cheek. When miſty age obſcures
Thine eye's tranſcendant ray: Yet, even then,
Shall Love purſue thee, lur'd by mental charms.
Theſe ſhall be thine, even to life's lateſt ſtage,
And ſpread a luſtre round thy ſilver hairs.

EMMA.

And doſt thou think the breath of empty praiſe
Can ſhake the even tenour of my ſoul?
Give o'er perſuaſion, Dane. Pains, Priſon, Death,
I'd ſooner meet, and cheerfully endure,
Than join my hand to one my heart abhors.

TURKILL, *(preſenting* Canutus's *picture.)*

Yet one more ſuit. Canutus tenders this,
His picture, Lady. Oh! reject it not.
Such is the Lover that you treat with ſcorn.

EMMA.

Myſterious Providence! Is this your King?

TURKILL.

His ſemblance, Madam. Art eſſay'd its beſt,
Yet was it poor. The eye's ſuperior luſtre—
The emanation of a noble ſoul—
The look of truth—the air of dignity,
The Painter drew not. It excell'd his power.
This ring he alſo gives.

BIRTHA.

Pale is her cheek,—
She weeps and trembles! What may this portend?

EMMA.

The ſame!—Retire a moment. *Exit Turkill.*
Oh! my Birtha,
Can Man preſume to ſearch events unborn?
The ſtranger Knight, who won my youthful love,
The gallant Chief, ador'd in Normandy,
Is Denmark's Victor King.

BIRTHA.

Delightful tidings!

EMMA.

Yes, I remember the alluring form.
Time has matured each beauty. Graceful thus
His raven locks hung waving. So he ſmiled,
When, in the tournament, his rival fell,
And loud applauſe proclaim'd him Conqueror.
Could I expect I ſhould again behold him?
He lives—He loves—Now Emma! thou art happy.

BIRTHA.

Be't mine with blended joy, as friend and ſubject,
To graſp thy knees, and hail thee, royal Lady,
Once more the Queen of England!

EMMA.

Ha! That title!
My fancy, which by love enchanted ſtray'd
To crown herſelf with roſes, back recoils,
Shock'd at thy image, Ethelred! 'Tis true,
I was thy wife.

BIRTHA.

Fly to thy faithful lover.
Why thus irresolute?

EMMA.

The Dane's success
Clouded with misery thy declining years.
Unhappy Prince! Emma respects thy ashes;
And, to the guidance of thy martial son,
Submits her future conduct.

BIRTHA.

Ha! to Edmund?
He hates the brave Canutus.

EMMA.

Are the bars
Between us broken? hence delusive love.
Emma, resume thyself, and act the part
Of steady Honour. Call the Messenger. *Exit Birtha.*
Exalted Saints! bless'd Monitors! who fix
The great resolve and chase the mists of passion,
Assist a wretched mortal, who aspires
To gain the noblest conquest—Self-possession.

Scene VII.

Enter TURKILL and BIRTHA.

EMMA.

Bear this, my anſwer, to your gen'rous Lord.
Crowns may have charms for ſome, but he that ſues
For Emma's true eſteem, muſt offer more.

TURKILL.

Impoſſible! the world affords no joy,
Surpaſſing Empire, Pomp, and happy Love.

EMMA.

Thou talk'ſt like one, whoſe views Creation bounds;
Know, theſe, when Honor bids, I greatly ſcorn.
Thou ſay'ſt, Canutus wiſhes much to name Me
For ever his.

TURKILL.

Beyond all elſe but Heaven.

EMMA.

I take thy word. Ambition's fleeting joys,
And all the guilty boaſt of conqu'ring power,
He will reſign, with Britain's Crown, to Edmund:
Nay, ſtart not, Dane. On this condition only
Can I be his.

TURKILL.

Reſign the Britiſh Crown!
For which the North, for many a tedious year,

Has ſent her ſons to bleed on diſtant coaſts,
Unwept, unhonour'd, giv'n to birds of prey?
It muſt not Lady; no, it cannot be.

EMMA, *(kneels)*

Hear then my awful oath, Angelic Powers!
By all your myſtic glories, thus I ſwear——
Never to plight my Faith, with great Canutus,
Till Edmund leads me to the ſacred Altar,
And there avers him, his and England's friend.

TURKILL.

Tremendous vow! Death only breaks the bond,
Recall it, Princeſs, e'er th' atteſting Angel
Grave it on heav'nly records.

EMMA, *(riſing)*

May the ſtings,
That perjur'd boſoms feel, envenom mine,
If e'er I break it! Now thou know'ſt my anſwer,
Perhaps his fond remembrance ſtill is dear:
But it avails not.

TURKILL.

That forbidding eye
Prevents my further prayers. Great Queen farewell.
Exit Turkill.

EMMA, *(after a pauſe)*

At length the conflicts o'er.—Now ſooth me, Conſcience,
With ſweet applauſe. Come, Friendſhip, pour thy balm
On this torn heart: I've given him up for ever.

Yet, great Canutus, muſt thou own my conduct
Has not diſgrac'd thy love. What, haſt thou kept
The picture?

BIRTHA.

Shall I bear it to the Dane?

EMMA.

No! Let me gaze. Honor forbids not this.
Lord of my heart, thou ſhalt be treaſur'd here:
Nought, but the chilling graſp of Death, ſhall tear
Away thy fond remembrance. Soon, too ſoon,
The battle muſt begin. Then will Canutus,
Griev'd at my ſcorn, expoſe his ſacred life
To certain danger. Should he fall, I charge thee,
(For my heart tells, I ſhall not long ſurvive him)
Inter us in one grave. Oh! lead me hence,
Where I may weep unnotic'd by the World.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

Scene I.—Glouceſter Caſtle.

Enter CEFRID and KENELM.

KENELM.

Cefrid, the ſoldier's veſtment well becomes
Thy aged limbs. Such zealous loyalty,
Confers new honors on thy ſilver hairs,
Reſtores thy youth, and makes thy perſon ſacred.

CEFRID.

Oh! name them not. My deeds are all too poor
To pay my debt of gratitude. 'Twas Edmund
Who call'd me, when an exil'd wanderer, home,
And gave me back my former dignity.
'Twas hard, my gallant Friend, indeed 'twas hard,
When age required repoſe, then to be baniſh'd:
My perſecutor, he, whoſe wars I fought,
Unthankful Ethelred.

KENELM.

Had he rever'd
His kingly oath, the Danes, our tyrants now,
Had trembled at our name. But all is loſt.
At Aſhdown, never—never to return,
The Britiſh glory fled.

CEFRID.

Doſt thou deſpair?
When the great Edmund yet ſurvives to lead

With vig'rous charge, and animate our ſouls?
Does he not burn, impatient to eraſe
The record of his flight?

KENELM.

The guilt of Edrick
Dejects the wonted ardor of his ſpirit,
And grieves him far beyond the loſs of empire.
Oft burſts the loud complaint: But when inform'd
Of thy arrival, on his face appear'd
A tranſient ſmile. Then ſuddenly he ſtarted,
Sigh'd, and exclaim'd,—" Edrick, the Mercian's faith
" Stamps tenfold guilt on thee."

CEFRID.

Behold, he comes.

Scene II.

Enter EDMUND.

Yon wood will ſcreen an ambuſh, Kenelm. Haſte,
Inſtant let Sigbert, with an hundred ſoldiers,
Secure that poſt, and when the battle joins,
Fall on the Daniſh rear.—I think he's honeſt.

Exit Kenelm.

O Cefrid, wherefore, diff'rent from the World,
Serv'ſt thou the Son of beggar'd Miſery?
Theſe ſmall domains are now thy maſter's all.

CEFRID.

I aſk no gift, I barely do my duty.

EDMUND.

The Man that does it, ſhould be made a King;
Nor would the earth have many. Oh! my Friend,
I've long'd for battle, as the blind for ſight:
Nor, till the Dane retreated, dropt my arm.
Behold me now, inſenſible of fame,
Careleſs of what befalls, diſpirited.
Canſt thou divine, whence ſprings the fatal change?

CEFRID.

Much injur'd goodneſs!

EDMUND.

Moſt unworthy Brother!
Thou haſt undone me. Death muſt needs be ſweet,
Fraud lurks not in the grave.

CEFRID.

Courage, great Prince!
This day muſt bring us Death or Victory.

EDMUND.

Life's but a ſultry day. Intrepid heart!
Faint not, with toil, beneath the ſcorching ſun.
Soon will the welcome ſhades of evening riſe,
And bring thy wiſh'd repoſe.

CEFRID.

South, from theſe tow'rs,
Stand the proud foes. Arm thy vindictive ſoul
T' avenge thy ſubjects, and confound their pride.

Enter an OFFICER.

My Lord, the treach'rous Edrick claims admittance.

EDMUND.

Edrick? he brings ſome meſſage from Canutus?
Let him approach. Be calm, be calm, my heart!

Scene III.

Enter EDRICK.

EDMUND.

What hath thy Lord, the Dane, to aſk of Edmund?

EDRICK.

Haſt thou forgot me?

EDMUND.

Thou wert once my brother,
But thou art now my foe.

EDRICK.

How juſt thy taunts!
Give vent to thy upbraidings. Curſe me, Edmund;
I have deſerv'd it all.

EDMUND.

I'll not reproach thee.
Language can never paint my wrongs.

EDRICK.

I own it.
The vile offender owns it. Mercy! Mercy!

EDMUND.

Off, Hypocrite! What, would'ſt thou have my life?

Mean'ſt thou to bind and ſell me to the Dane?
Mercy diſclaims a wretch like thee.

EDRICK.

Yet Heaven
Is won by deep repentance, and——

EDMUND.

Repentance?
It claims no power o'er ſuch obdurate hearts.
He, that could cauſe and ſee his country's ruin,
Can never feel contrition.

EDRICK.

Tort'ring guilt!

EDMUND.

Haſt thou forgot thy Father? Sure the thought
Of what he ſuffer'd, from theſe rude invaders,
Might nerve thy ſoul to vengeance. Thou didſt ſee him
Sink 'neath a weight of unexampled ſorrows.
A royal, aged vagabond. Go, Edrick,
Join with his foes. Go, trample on his aſhes,
And be a monſter.

EDRICK.

That I've ruin'd thee,
Diſtracts me moſt.

EDMUND.

Would Heaven, that crime were all!
So might the ſhameful record be expung'd,
And our divided hearts unite again.

But thou haſt ruin'd Britain,—ſpoil'd her hopes;
E'en in the happy hour of Victory,
Giv'n her to ſharp Oppreſſion and the Dane.
How many nobles aſk from thee their ſons!
Think how they died, ſlain in the morn of life.
Think of their early virtues,—and deſpair.

EDRICK.

Since nought but Death can expiate my crimes,
Oh! Edmund, once the moſt humane of men,
Curſe not thy Brother, and he dies before thee!
Grief cannot palliate treachery like mine.
And yet to tell my agony of ſoul,
My trembling tongue denies.

EDMUND.

Unhappy man!

EDRICK.

Doſt thou then pity me? Oh! generous Edmund!
Thy pity here is ſweet. Where ſhall I look?
If on the paſt, what ſee I but thy love
And my miſdeeds? If on the preſent, what
But hooting Scorn and cloudy Infamy?
If on the future, ha! 'tis death to think,
Uncancell'd guilt and Heaven's impetuous wrath.
No Friend!—No pleading Angel!—Nature ſinks.
My brain turns round! Can I bear this and live?
Thou who haſt kept thy honeſt faith ſecure,
Preſerve it ſtill, nor be undone like me.

CEFRID.

The King relents. By heaven, a tear of pity
Stands in his eye.

EDMUND.

Cefrid, he wrings my ſoul!

EDRICK.

My ſoldiers, from the Daniſh camp detach'd,
Now march with willing ardor to rejoin thee.
Receive,—forgive them. To thy Brother's baſeneſs
Impute their fault, and let his vital blood
Atone for all. [*Attempting to kill himſelf.*

EDMUND.

Live—keep thy blood for Britain.
Live to eraſe the mem'ry of thy fall.
Ruſh not on Death, thus, with uncleanſed heart.
He prays: O Mercy, hear!

EDRICK.

Doſt thou not hate me?

EDMUND.

Wilt thou by future deeds deſerve my love?

EDRICK.

I do not merit truſt; yet will I be
The man, thy ſoul delights in, ſuffering patient
The leader's cares, the ſun-burnt ſoldier's labours.

EDMUND.

Yet, e'er I join thee to my panting breaſt,

Declare, whence ſprings this change. Is it revenge
For ſome rude inſult ſuffer'd from the Dane?
Or comes thy agony from true contrition?
Me, Edrick, thou again may'ſt wrong, but Heaven
Beholds thy deeds. Wake not its utmoſt wrath
By daring on reiterated crimes.

EDRICK.

I do deſerve diſtruſt. Oh! that my breaſt
Were now diſclos'd to thy diſcerning eye,
So ſhould I find an acceſs to thy heart.

EDMUND.

Too well thou know'ſt the way to Edmund's heart,
Nor can I marvel, ſince 'twas ever thine.
Think then how bitterly thy falſehood pain'd me.
Of this, no more: be thy miſdeeds forgot;
Or but remember'd, as a maniac's raving,
To be a theme for conſtant gratitude,
When ſenſe long abſent, wiſh'd-for gueſt, returns,
But let thy Edmund take thee in his arms.
I have forgiv'n thee: Riſe—intreat no more.

EDRICK.

This is unhoped for goodneſs.

EDMUND.

Rev'rend Cefrid!
You, who with me, have wept my Brother's loſs,
Partake the tranſport his return beſtows.

CEFRID.

Him, that reſolves to tread the paths of honor,
Cefrid will hold moſt dear.

EDRICK.

Spoke like a Britoh!
Oh! that I ne'er had loſt that glorious name.
Would the conteſted Earldom, that inflam'd me
With rage and envy, had been ſunk in earth!
Yet when I waken'd from the helliſh dream,
The tygreſs, howling for her raviſh'd young,
Was far leſs furious. For my peace, my honour,
The pride of virtue, and the boaſt of birth,
Were loſt—for ever loſt.

EDMUND.

Say not for ever.
Cancel thy falſehood, by ſuperior truth,
And I will hold thee to my heart again
With confidence and love.

EDRICK.

Nobleſt of men!
Give but the bleſt occaſion, and this ſword,
By thee diverted from this contrite boſom,
Shall ſtrew the field with Daniſh carcaſes.

EDMUND.

Thy merit ſhall be prov'd. Scorning defeat,
Again this day my Britons ſhine in arms.
Determin'd race! to the laſt pauſe of life,
Safely they guard their liberties and laws.
Again, my Friend, my dauntleſs courage glows:
Edrick is mine. Now, Denmark, I defy thee.
His kindred arm ſhall guard his Brother's ſide.
Go firſt, and to the Miniſter of Heaven
Confeſs thy fault, and kneel for benediction.

EDRICK.

Bleſs'd, in thy love, my heart o'erflows with joy.
Since Edmund pardons, what can Edrick fear?

Exit Edrick.

EDMUND.

Thou, gallant Cefrid, haſten to thy troops:
Inflame their courage. Tell them, Edrick's our's,
And Denmark reſt of all, that England fear'd.
Inſtant I'll lead them to the glorious combat.

Exit Cefrid.

Enter KENELM.

What means thy quick return?

KENELM.

My Liege, the troops
Of Edrick have revolted from the Dane,
And halt within our out-works. In the Caſtle,
A Daniſh Nobleman is juſt arrived.
He bears a Flag of Truce, and ſays his buſineſs
Is with the King.

EDMUND.

Comes he to claim ſubmiſſion?
To bid me yield this remnant of my power?
No! he ſhall trample firſt on Edmund's corſe.

Scene IV.

Enter HAROLD.

Canutus ſends to Edmund friendly greeting.

EDMUND.

I thank his courteſy. What wills he now?

HAROLD.

Thus ſaith the King: Too long has furly war,
Stern foe to ſocial ties and gentle virtues,
Enſlav'd and ravag'd this once fertile land;
'Tis time, at length, to give the mourner reſt.——

EDMUND.

Ill fare the wretch, whoſe curs'd ambition cauſed
This dire diſtreſs! Repay him Heaven with blood!
Dane, tell thy Lord to leave hypocriſy,
Nor mourn the evils, that from him proceed.

HAROLD.

To the rude bands, that form the throng of war,
It nought avails, who guides the reins of power,
So he, that holds them, bear an even hand.
Thou muſt confeſs the virtues of Canutus.——

EDMUND.

Deſigns your King to talk away my Crown?
Or thinks he, aliens feel for England's woes,
More deep than Engliſh Kings? I mourn her ſufferings;
But will not yield her to the Lordly Dane,
Whilſt vigour nerves my arm. If your Canutus
So deeply mourns this waſte of Chriſtian blood,

Let him ſtand forth: I'll meet him breaſt to breaſt,
And fight for Life and Empire.

HAROLD.

Hear me, Prince:
'Tis for this awful purpoſe I am come.
True valour triumphs in my maſter's ſoul;
He will not ſhade his palms with treachery.
"Aſhdown, he cries, ſhall never give me England,
"But I will win her, as an hero ought,
"From her brave King, before I call her mine."
The day, the place of fight, by thee appointed,
And juſt conditions ſworn to. He propoſes
By ſingle combat to decide the chance,
What King ſhall reign o'er Britain.

EDMUND.

Let the time
Be now; the place, the midſt of yonder plain:
Round let our adverſe hoſts in order ſtand,
And patient wait the iſſue. Tell your King,
I praiſe his worth. Say, if beneath his arm,
Lifeleſs, I fall, 'twill be ſome conſolation
To think a hero will receive my Crown.

HAROLD.

Thy brave reſolve, Canutus will applaud:
For much that Monarch honors kindred worth,
Nor will he yield the prize of hardihood
Without a conteſt fearful.

EDMUND.

It is well. *Exit Harold.*
'Tis painful muſing now,—'twill ſoon be tumult,

And then to live a King, or die a Hero.
What if, within an hour, theſe active limbs,
Bath'd in the icy dews of death, ſhall lie
At Denmark's feet, the ſoul can ne'er be vanquiſh'd.
Impaſſive it defies the mortal ſpear,
And ſoars triumphant from the well-fought field,
Bequeathing peace to England. Should the Dane
Become a tyrant,—ſcourge her with oppreſſion;
But the kind grave will then cloſe up my ear:
Nor can her agonizing groans diſturb
My tranquil ſleep.

KENELM.

Why, my beloved Maſter!
Diſtruſt thy ſoldiers, and refuſe with them
To ſhare the fame and danger?

EDMUND.

Not diſtruſt,
But admiration of their oft-tried faith,
Impels me to this peril. Let me periſh,
Rather than ſee thoſe loyal boſoms gor'd
Again in my behalf.

Scene V.

Enter ELGIVA.

ELGIVA.

Then 'tis too true;
To dangerous fight he goes—he bleeds! he dies!
Oh! Elgiva, how wilt thou bear the fight,
When he returns, by weeping ſoldiers borne?

When the ſtern heart, that's ſteel'd by battle, yearns?
How wilt thou rave! how tear thy braided locks,
And almoſt menace Heaven!

EDMUND.

For pity, ceaſe!
A nation's fate depends on Edmund's arm.
Send me not forth thus dull, thus woe-begone;
Or, at the firſt attack of martial Denmark,
The ſword will fall from my enfeebled hand,
And yield him cheap ſucceſs.

ELGIVA.

Would Heav'n, my tears
Could keep thee from this combat! they ſhould flow
For ever. Thus I'd plead till language fail'd.
The death-devoted villain pleads for life,
But I for more than life: I plead for thee.
The Mother craves protection for her ſon,—
A playful youngling, pleas'd with vernant life,
He ſmiles on all, nor dreams of future woes.
Shall Denmark ſeize his birthright, and inſult
The poor unfriended boy?

EDMUND.

The Dane is noble.
Could I refuſe the combat, he propos'd,
And be a Patriot King?

ELGIVA.

Was 't not ſufficient
To ſhare the danger with the baſe-born ſoldier?
Muſt thou engroſs it, ſingly meet ill-fortune,

So prodigal to ſpill the ſacred blood,
By thee deriv'd from many a famous hero.

EDMUND.

Taught, by their deeds, to know my birthright—Honour.
Shall they complain, that Edmund Ironſide
Diſgrac'd the virtues of his untaught ſires,
Tho' plac'd in days when emulation rous'd
The ſpark of generous worth.

ELGIVA.

Fix'd is thy fame.
Sev'n battles, won from Denmark, ſhall engrave it
On ev'ry grateful breaſt.

EDMUND.

The truly brave
Muſt ſcorn repoſe, whene'er occaſion calls.
The death of Edmund gives his country peace:
How rapt'rous is that thought!

ELGIVA.

To me how dreadful!

EDMUND.

Does not the ſoul, that warms each peaſant's boſom,
Boaſt as divine an origin as mine?
Their ſervice ſhall I arrogate, yet ſhrink
From my own duty? O my Love! be calm.
The Cottage Matron, for her ſlaughter'd ſpouſe,
Or orphan child, feels ſorrow ſharp as thine.
Do thou aſſert the gen'rous pride of birth,

Think that thy ſuff'rings give the nation peace,
And take a conſcious dignity from woe.

ELGIVA.

Go then to fight! obey the call of glory:
Tho' pain'd affection at thy danger ſtart,
To me thy fame is ſacred. Go, farewell!
Cold, as the dire arreſt of death, that word
Strikes to my heart.

EDMUND.

And does not Edmund ſuffer!
Thou lov'lieſt mourner? Did I tell my ſorrows;
But hence complaint: Tears muſt not ſtain my cheek.
Angelic pow'rs, who watch o'er Innocence,
Save—ſave, my child! and bleſs my Elgiva!

Exeunt ſev.

Scene VI.—Small diſtance from the Caſtle.

Enter EDRICK and ALLWYN.

ALLWYN.

My Lord, a rumour ſpreads throughout your troops,
That ſtern Canutus and your mighty Brother,
By ſingle combat will, this day, decide
The iſſue of the war.

EDRICK.

I know it, Allwyn;
And, truſt me, Fortune now, with kindeſt aſpect,
Looks on our hopes. Let daring Royalty
Expoſe its breaſt to danger's furious ſhock,

I give them ample leave. Let them fight on,
Till each is ſatisfied. O that thy boſom
Glow'd with as warm a zeal for enterprize,
As mine now feels.

ALLWYN.

My ever gracious Maſter!
Diſcloſe to my attentive ear your wiſhes;
The ready execution of this arm
Attends your will.

EDRICK.

I know thee, and will truſt thee.
The armies deem the rivals juſtly match'd,
And wait, with beating hearts, the chance of war,
But I, who rate them better, can predict,
Succeſs will follow Edmund's agile arm,
Skillful and ſtrong alike. Now mark me, Allwyn;
Thou haſt the ſkill, with ſureſt aim, to wing
The pointed dart. Amongſt the troops of Denmark
Chooſe a fit place, and when the ſhouts of triumph
Salute the Conqueror, guide th' envenom'd ſhaft
Even to the breaſt of Edmund. If he fall,
Amid the tumult drop thy bow, and herd
Amongſt the Britons; and the ſlaughter'd bodies
Of my ſlain rivals, now no more my fear,
Shall be the ſteps to mount me to the throne.

ALLWYN.

Where is the Infant Prince?

EDRICK.

In ſanctuary,
At Glouceſter-Priory. But the young ſerpent

May ſoon be ſeiz'd, if all elſe ſuits my purpoſe.
Already, towards the plain, the Daniſh hoſt
Moves like a ſable cloud; and fearleſs Edmund
Had lac'd the cuiraſs on his panting breaſt,
When I came from the Caſtle.

ALLWYN.

He ſhall come,
Falſely ſecure; even as the Lybian lion,
With ſtately ſtep, walks to the artful ſnare,
Laid, by avenging ſhepherds, for his ruin.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

Scene I.—A Plain.

Enter HAROLD, and Daniſh Lords.

First LORD.

Th' important moment comes, when Denmark's fate
Reſts on the vigour of her Monarch's arm.
Ye ſainted Guardians, of our country, ſmile
Propitious now!

Second LORD.

Our King ſcarce brooks a rival
In regal pow'r; but in high feats of arms,
Scorns to be aught but greatly excellent.

HAROLD.

So may this day's ſucceſs declare! O Friends,
Should he be vanquiſh'd, Denmark ſinks to nothing:
Forc'd from their barren homes, her numerous ſons
Fix'd on this fertile iſle, as a fit ſtation,
Whereon to raiſe the maſſy pile of Empire.
This to achieve, her nobleſt blood hath flow'd
For many a year.

First LORD.

Muſt we not blame Canutus;
Who, now triumphant, yields his certain right
To the deciſion of uncertain Fortune?

HAROLD.

Long have the rival Kings inceſſant toil'd
To gain a nobler prize than Conqueſt—Fame.
The brave diſdain ſucceſs acquir'd by baſeneſs.
Canutus waves the ſtrange events of Aſhdown,
And calls again on Fortune to decide.

Second LORD.

The King appears.

Scene II.

Enter CANUTUS and TURKILL.

CANUTUS.

Oh! Turkill, urge no more.
Can I, as King, endure the harſh condition?
Reſign my conqueſt?—my indignant blood
Mounts at the thought. Implore the love of Edmund?
O meanneſs!—never—Emma, I reſign thee;
And, loathing further life, now ſeek to die
At leaſt with honour.

TURKILL.

Who can blame thy love,
That looks on Merit with approving eye?
So ſweet her manner—ſo refin'd her ſenſe—
Such native dignity of ſoul, adorns her,
As might well recompence an Empire loſt.

CANUTUS.

Proceed.—How ſweet this ſubject to a lover?
Yes; ſhe's perfection all: yet muſt I ſtill

Refuſe her,—ſhun her as my dangerous foe.
Emma, thy charms would dignify a cottage.
Ah! Heavens, that I might take thy harſh condition,
And knit thy fate with mine!

TURKILL.

What can prevent?

CANUTUS.

My country.—'Tis a name, grav'd on my heart
By mighty Nature, when ſhe gave me being,
And all its int'reſts ſhall to me be ſacred.
My honour too forbids,—that ſteady honour,
Which bids me now reſtore to Ironſide,
The chance in war, which Aſhdown meanly ſtole.
Yet ſo reſtore it, that the deadly hazard
Light on myſelf alone.

TURKILL.

Heroic purpoſe!

CANUTUS *(coming forward.)*

Well met, my countrymen! my ſtedfaſt ſoul
Hath vanquiſh'd fear, why lives it in your looks?
Edmund and I no more, like jarring clouds
That mutter thunder, ſhall diſturb your joys.
A Crown the happy victor takes, the vanquiſh'd
A bed of earth and marble covering.
Ye ſhall have peace, my Friends, whoe'er ſucceeds!
I wonder much that Edmund thus delays.

HAROLD.

Your ready zeal, my Liege, outſtrips his caution;

Yet, if the diſtant trumpeter ſpeaks true,
He now approaches.

CANUTUS.

Wherefore do I tremble?
Treach'ry can not again obſcure my conqueſt.
The dread habiliments of fable war
Have caſt new luſtre round my mighty rival:
He moves ſublime in conſcious excellence.
How light, how trifling, is the pomp of Courts,
To this irradiance of ſuperior worth!
His hardy followers range around the plain:
He ſmites his breaſt. Oh! 'tis a gallant breaſt!
Why ſmite it, Edmund? What awakes thy woe?
Is it to ſee thy troops, the ſcanty gleaning
Of many a well-fought field?

TURKILL.

Praiſe, from a foe,
Reflects a merit on the generous giver.

CANUTUS.

See, how the Britiſh Nobles crowd around!
They kneel—they graſp his hand, they wring it hard,
They bathe it with their tears. To me does Denmark
Seem thus attach'd? No! I deſerve it not.

TURKILL.

Blame not thyſelf, my Liege; the ſouls of Britons
Are tun'd to tenderneſs and gratitude.

CANUTUS.

See, he approaches.

Scene III.

To them—Enter EDMUND, CEFRID, KENELM, Britiſh Lords.

EDMUND.

'Tis enough, my Friends,
Theſe were the virtues of your great forefathers.
Thus did they cheriſh, in their conſtant boſoms,
The ſacred flame of Truth and Loyalty.
Yet check this wild extreme.

CEFRID.

Worth great as thine
Demands ſuch grief.

EDMUND.

Affection's fervent pauſe
Delights the heart that's conſcious of deſert.
Yes, I have done my duty; lov'd thee, Britain,
With all a Patriot's warmth. O righteous Heaven!
If e'er with arrogance I ſpurn'd the injur'd,
Or ſcreen'd the baſe, or bow'd to private ends
My Crown's due dignity,—be this the moment
For retribution! Let the hand of Denmark
Fulfil thy great decrees!

KENELM.

No, guiltleſs King!
If goodneſs gains the victory, 'tis thine.

EDMUND.

The praiſe of Man is all but ſuperficial!
To Man our actions ſpeak, our thoughts to Heaven.
Before the eye of dread omniſcience, Vice
Drops her concealing maſk. Yet, ſure, Deceit
Herds not with wretches, who appear to ſtand
On the dread brink of vaſt eternity!
Here Edmund ſtands, and ſwears, by all his hopes,
No unrepented guilt lies cold at heart,
To make him ſhudder at death's near approach.

CANUTUS.

Does not each ſoldier ſeem to wiſh the peril,
To ſave his King?

EDMUND.

My generous Friends, farewell!
Prince, in performance of my oath, I come.
Yet e'er I join in combat, for my country,
I claim theſe juſt conditions: If I fall,
Rule her with clemency and royal juſtice.
Seize not the honours of her antient Nobles
To deck thy Daniſh Captains, but obſerve
The laws of Alfred, Britain's glorious boaſt.
Remember, conqueſt is the gift of Fortune;
But well to uſe that conqueſt, proves the Hero.

CANUTUS.

If ever tyranny deform my reign,
May I be infamous in ev'ry age!
Hear this, ye Hoſt of Heav'n!—I now demand,
For my brave Danes, ſecurity from wrong,
If thou ſucceed'ſt.

EDMUND.

Me too, ye Angels hear!
And favour me, as I ſincerely ſwear
To guard them from contempt and injury.

CANUTUS.

The guiltleſs blood, ſpilt by thy faithleſs Sire,
Still unaton'd, hangs like a murky cloud
Portending ill to Britain.

EDMUND.

Nam'ſt thou this;
When blacker crimes obſcure the Daniſh annals?
But let our vain recriminations end,
We meet not here to talk of former woes,
But, by our blood, to terminate them all,
My ſoul ill brooks delay.

CANUTUS.

Not worſe than mine,
Come—lift thy arm; away with childiſh parley.

EDMUND.

A moment ſtop: the unoffending Fair
And helpleſs Infant, fragile innocent,
Alike, from friend and foe, demand protection.
Denmark, by her who gave thee birth, I charge thee
Kindly to treat my Son and heart-lov'd Queen.

CANUTUS.

They ſhall be ſacred. Come, ye Daniſh Heroes,
From Thor to Swayne, my Sire, be preſent now:
Now ſtring my nervous arm.

EDMUND.

Immortal Power!
That guid'ſt the rapid car of Victory,
Thou great Diſpoſer of terreſtrial good,
To thee I truſt my cauſe. [*They fight.*

KENELM.

Amazing ſcene!

TURKILL.

The Britiſh King retires, our's is the conqueſt.

CEFRID.

Would I had licence to rebuke thy falſehood,
Preſumptuous Dane! A Briton never yields.
'Twas but a ſkillful feint. See, how he turns
With renovated ſtrength; he ſhakes his plume:
He forms a magic circle with his ſword,
Nor dares your King invade it.

KENELM.

Glorious ſtruggle!
See how they pant and toil. Their eager ſouls
Seem to look out, and ſparkle at their eyes.
Oh! that they both might live!

HAROLD.

Canutus yields.
He lifts his hand, as if intending parley.
Be kind to Denmark, Heaven!

CANUTUS.

A moment ſtay!
A ſupernat'ral horror overwhelms me.

Thrice have I aim'd a mortal ſtroke, and thrice
My arm grew nerveleſs—my chill ſoul recoil'd.
Oh! Edmund; virtue keeps thy perſon ſacred.

EDMUND.

Delay not thus. The prize of Life and Empire
Is undecided ſtill.

CANUTUS.

So ſhall it ſtay.
In admiration of thy peerleſs worth
I cancel former hatred.

EDMUND.

Would to Heaven,
We both had ſprung from Britiſh Parentage!
Then, by thy virtues charm'd, I would have held thee
My deareſt Friend; but 'twere unſeemly now.

CANUTUS.

Art thou determin'd then? Still burns the fire
Of enmity? Muſt it be quench'd with blood?
The ſpacious world affords us ample room
For both to conquer.

EDMUND.

But, content with Britain,
I ſeek not to invade another's right.
To guard the Empire of my Anceſtors,
From all aſſailants, is my ſole ambition.

CANUTUS.

'Tis hard for ſouls like mine, that fiercely burn
To be alone the darling of renown,

To tell the world, a rival's worth is greater.
Yet ſuch I do, O moſt divine of men!
The great, the dread, Canutus owns with tears,
He'd give his glory to be lov'd like thee.

EDMUND.

Art thou ſincere?

CANUTUS.

Nay, think not I deceive,
My ſoul's too proud to learn hypocriſy.
Nor think my breaſt ſo petrified, by war,
That nought of ſocial duties touch my ſoul.
My ſtrength thou haſt not conquer'd, but my heart,
A far more noble victory is thine.

EDMUND.

Perſuaſions on thy tongue. O that thy hand
Had ne'er been famous in the feats of arms!
My murder'd Britons, my unhappy Father,—
By thee unhappy made—in mournful pomp
Riſe to my view, and ſteel my yielding boſom.

CANUTUS, *(dropping his Sword)*

Be then my foe. 'Twere ſacrilege in me,
To lift my arm 'gainſt virtue I adore.
Has not Canutus equal cauſe for hatred?
Oft has thy falchion thinn'd his lov'd aſſociates,
Yet he foregoes it all—intreats thy friendſhip.
His ſtubborn ſoul is humbled to entreaty,
And art thou callous ſtill?

EDMUND.

Say, wond'rous Man!
On what foundation ſhall we build our love?

For, like a fabrick, by ſome madman rais'd,
Unfounded love falls into ſpeedy ruin.

CANUTUS.

Taught, by thy worth, to think ambition poor,
No more I'd claim thy Crown, did not the Danes
Here interpoſe and urge the waſte of blood
Their fathers ſpilt to gain it. And can I
Reſign the whole of what their valour won?
The goodly land affords ſufficient ſpace
For thee, brave Prince, and Denmark: let us ſhare it:
The Mercian, Southern, and Weſt-Saxon realms,
Shall be thy portion; and to me aſſign
The Eaſtern Province, and Northumbria,
Where long my anceſtors have fix'd their homes.
Let war no more appear to ſpoil the fruits
Of toiling induſtry, but, in her ſtead,
Let Dane and Briton meet, in ſocial truſt,
And loſe each trace of former enmity.

EDMUND.

The realm is thine. Doſt thou, indeed, propoſe
This free partition? Gen'rous—noble Foe!
To treat thee ſtill with ſcorn, would indicate
A brutal diſpoſition. Take my hand,
Pledge of my heart and earneſt of my love.

CANUTUS.

Th' unworthy many, from mean ſelfiſhneſs,
Derive their trivial friendſhips, quickly ſpent:
They that love praiſe, ſeek out a paraſite;
Villain with villain mates, and fool with fool;

Soon fix'd, ſoon ſated. Theſe, the brave and wiſe,
With pity viewing, form no ſtrict attachment,
Till they, embrace like me, a fellow ſoul!

EDMUND.

In mute amaze our wond'ring ſquadrons ſtand,
Muſing what this portends. O great Canutus!
The generous heart diſclaims all ſelfiſh bliſs,
Let us to them impart our happineſs,
And feel redoubled bliſs, beholding their's.

CANUTUS.

Britons and Danes, names once proverbial us'd
To note eternal hate, approach with joy,
Your Kings are foes no more. [*They come forward.*

EDMUND.

Too long, my Friends,
Hath ſurly diſcord frown'd. Indulgent Heav'n
At length admits of Peace, nor muſt I ſcorn
The gentle viſitant. We, as your Champions,
Toiling, have found each other's worth the ſame;
Prelude to fair accord. The Weſtern parts,
Late bow'd to alien maſters, ſhall be mine;
The Eaſtern, Denmark's. Friends, are ye content!
Or muſt we war?

ALL.

Content! Content! Peace! Peace!

EDMUND.

Companions, Chiefs, in arduous battle prov'd,

Atteſt my words. With tranſport I declare
Canutus mine and Britain's Friend.

CANUTUS.

Oh! Turkill,
My heart hath caught that word. Auſpicious day!
Edmund, Canutus craves from thee a boon,
By far more rich than Empire.

EDMUND.

What? demand it.

CANUTUS.

Thy lovely Step-dame, Emma: Now to tell,
How long—how well we've lov'd,—what ſtrange events
Nipt, e'er their bloom, our infant joys, were vain.
Suffice to ſay, the dignified Enchantreſs
Rejects my vows, 'till authoriz'd by thee.

EDMUND.

This day, propitious to the ſocial duties,
Shall, in our Caſtle, ſee all rites perform'd——
This day, to one, her peer in excellence,
Shall Edmund give his Father's beauteous Queen.
Bring ev'ry grace, and each connubial virtue,
And guard, ye heavenly powers, the Happy Pair!

Exeunt.

Scene IV.—The Caſtle.

Enter ELGIVA.

I would entreat for Edmund, could I frame
My ſcatter'd thoughts to holy offices.
Should the Dane conquer, what remains for me
But to inter the honourable corſe,
With pious rites, then cloſe my eyes for ever?
But ah! my Child! could I abandon him
To the ſtern frown of callous Arrogance,
Grown mighty by his ruin!

Enter EDRICK.

Oh! my Siſter!
Death has been buſy on yon fatal plain.
The Dane had ſworn, by Hell, to glut his hunger
With ſacred blood. Treach'ry and murder follow'd,
Shall I proceed?

ELGIVA.

Yes, if thy words can kill me!
Yet come not here, with thy deceitful woe,
To intercept my ſanctity of grief.
Go, bid the fraudful Dane remember Aſhdown
Began what he has finiſh'd.

EDRICK.

Do not taunt
The penitent, your noble Lord forgave.
I come to offer thee my trueſt ſervice,
And all my martial powers. Ne'er will I ſee
Thy Son bereft of Empire, by Canutus.

Intruſt him to my care, and I will ſeat him
On his paternal Throne.

ELGIVA.

Talk not of thrones——
Safety is all my humble hopes aſpire to.
The royal tree, that gave it ſhelter, fall'n,
Can the young nurſling hope to brave the ſtorm?
Hark!—'Tis the cruel murd'rer of my Huſband,
Trumpet Sounds,
Recent from ſlaughter,—muſt I meet him too?
Speak, dove-eyed Patience, to my troubled ſoul,
And ſtill the tumult there.

EDRICK, *(aſide)*

Ha! both alive?
What curs'd miſchance? hath Allwyn then betray'd me?
I muſt inquire the cauſe. *Exit Edrick.*

Scene V.

Enter EDMUND and CANUTUS.

EDMUND.

My Elgiva?

ELGIVA.

The voice of Edmund!

EDMUND.

Check thy anxious fears,
And give thy hand, the tender ſign of Friendſhip,

To great Canutus, who reſtores thine Edmund,
Whate'er his ſword hath gain'd.

CANUTUS.

Oh! royal Lady!
Subdu'd by excellence, tranſcending human,
I come to ſhew th' aſtoniſh'd world, what love
I bear thy Lord.

ELGIVA.

Can I ſupport this rapture?
My Edmund! I was weeping for thy death.
Whence ſprang that falſe report?

EDMUND.

Perhaps the ſight
Of the black raven, moving toward the Caſtle,
Alarm'd inventive fear. Doubt not, Canutus,
But noble Emma will receive, with joy,
The hand of ſuch a lover. Kindred merit
Binds ſoul to ſoul, and makes Earth ſeem like Heaven.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

Scene I.—Glouceſter Caſtle.

Enter EDRICK.

Diſpleas'd with bounded power, ſad, tho' in Heaven,
Angels through envy ſinn'd, and were accurs'd.
Am I like them?—Yon ſcene of joy and love
Stings me to madneſs. Would their cups were poiſon;
Their muſic, ſpells of baleful conjuration!
Now will the Dane be Edmund's boſom-friend:
His rugged ſoul foils all my artifice.
My ruin then is certain. Allwyn too
Grown conſcientious, piouſly refuſes
To violate a peace, which he affirms,
Confeſſes the immediate hand of Heaven,
Whoſe pardon he implores.—Then be it ſo.—
This arm ſhall execute its own deſigns.
Am not I loſt?—abandon'd?—reprobate?
O coward ſoul! why ſhun the ruffian's taſk.

Enter BIRTHA.

BIRTHA.

See, where the fall'n unhappy Edrick ſtands,
To doubt his deep contrition were inhuman.
Would art adopt this ſolitary woe,
Here, where no eye obſerves him?

EDRICK.

Conſcience, ceaſe:—
There is no milder courſe. What ſee I round
But danger imminent?

BIRTHA.

Ah! hear the voice
Of holy conſolation.—Nor alone,
To the ſhrill night-bird and the ruthleſs wind,
Tell thy long tale of woe, like reſtleſs ghoſts
That nightly hover o'er their mould'ring bodies.

EDRICK.

Why comes this woman to diſturb my thoughts? *Aſide.*
Out-caſt, like them, of Heaven and Earth abhorr'd,
Alone I rove, for there's no generous heart
Which, true to innocence itſelf, can pity
A wretch like me.

BIRTHA.

Ah! Edrick; is there none?
Unhappy Prince! when honours grac'd thy fortune,
Thy ample ſuite was throng'd with ſeeming friends.
Before misfortunes, paraſites retire,
As flies the ſwallow 'fore the winter's cold.
But my unſhaken truth approves thee ſtill,
And feels for all thy woes.

EDRICK.

Oh! matchleſs ſoftneſs!
Kind to the wretched, to the wicked gentle:
Not e'en thy ſoothing love can eaſe my cares.
Thee too I've wrong'd; ſtain'd thy pure cheek with ſhame—
Wak'd dire emotions in thy peaceful heart—
Forc'd thee to curſe the hour, when firſt thy eyes
Betray'd the ſoft complacency of love.

BIRTHA.

'Tis true, I ſorrow'd;—deeply felt thy guilt,

And wept its fatal conſequence: but now
All is reſtor'd, and thou again thyſelf.
My gloomy woe is lull'd to quietude.
Such is the wond'rous force of penitence
To purify offence.

EDRICK.

Curſe the fond wanton. [*Aſide.*
But how, to Edmund, can my truth be clear'd?
This peace with hated Denmark bars my arm.
Muſt I, with floods of tears, expunge his doubts?
Invent new oaths; call Heaven and Hell to witneſs,
And be at length but cautiouſly believ'd?
O were we ſtill at war: Ere this, my ſword,
Had thinn'd yon circle of inſulting foes,
They ſhould not hang the lip, and taunting tell
Of me and my repeated perfidies.

BIRTHA.

Dull ſolitude but foſters wretchedneſs.
Come let me lead thee to the chearful banquet,
Where, from the altar juſt return'd, the Kings
In ſober mirth and temperate feaſting join.
The lovely Queens, each dreſs'd in ſofteſt ſmiles,
Partake the feſtal ſcene. Oh! 'twere enough
To make Deſpair tread lightly, to behold
This flow of happineſs! The noble Dane
Hath ſmooth'd his awful brow, and eyes with joy
The long-lov'd partner of his heart. Full oft
He takes thy Brother's hand, and calls on Heaven
To make theſe tranſports laſt; then turns to wipe
The ſtarting tear of agonizing rapture.

EDRICK.

When will the talker ceaſe? [*Aſide.*

BIRTHA.

The godlike Edmund
Seems calmly bleſt. Britiſh and Daniſh Lords,
No longer foes, in unſuſpecting truſt
Bend o'er the ſocial board, and loud repeat
Old tales of ſtrange import. The pleaſure ſpreads
Through all the city. Youth exults to ſee
The proſpect bright'ning, and the fair portent
Of many a happy year. Whilſt feeble age,
In trem'lous broken accents, tells its joys
At ſeeing Britain's peace again return'd.

EDRICK.

What is this ſcene to me? Can I partake it?
Shall gloomy treaſon ſhare the feſtal board
Of bridal joy? Where'er I turn my eyes,
The dire anatomy of death arreſts them
With ſhame and horror arm'd.

BIRTHA.

Talk'ſt thou of death?
Of frantic ſuicide? That daring crime,
Precluding all repentance, rudely flies
To pluck th' Almighty's thunder from his graſp.
Think, Edrick, when the gulf is ſhot, no hand
Can lead thee back; no pitying Angel ope
The ever-during doors, which Hope ne'er viſits.
Were it not better then to bear with life,
Even as a priſoner drags his galling chains,
Till, by his Judge, reſtor'd to liberty.

EDRICK.

What?—Live to be deſpis'd?

BIRTHA.

Thy noble Brother
Hath ſeal'd thy pardon; cancell'd all his wrongs:
Haſte to his friendly arms.

EDRICK.

O Birtha! leave me,
Thy preſence heaps new agonies. *Exit Birtha.*
She's gone.
Am I alone? 'Tis well. Thoughts, dire as mine,
Delight in ſecrecy. Not long ago
Her beauty pleas'd me, but Ambition's ſun
O'erpower'd the ſtar of love.—What artful fiend
Whiſpers "thou haſt a dagger 'neath thy veſture?"
'Tis true, I have. Would its ſharp point were ſheath'd
In Edmund's heart! Would I cou'd ſtrike unſeen,
And blazon it for Denmark's treach'rous act!
Sure, the earth trembles:—Soul-appalling forms
Paſs in array before me! Edgar there,
Graſping his bleeding breaſt: He fell at Aſhdown.
My Father too; his ſilver locks diſhevell'd,
And groaning loud. The mighty dead expect
The ſoul of Edmund in their great aſſembly,
And he ſhall join them ſoon. Diſtract me not
Ye airy terrors; ſtubborn is my purpoſe.
They vaniſh. Ha! The King.

Scene II.

Enter EDMUND.

EDMUND.

I ſought thee, Edrick,
Now when each heart expands with happineſs,
When the poor ſlave of ſickneſs feebly wears
A tranſitory ſmile, wilt thou alone,
Thou, my Companion, Brother, deareſt Friend,
Stand ſadly brooding o'er forgotten ills.

EDRICK, *(aſide)*

O Virtue! pow'rful is thy influence;
E'en Envy feels thy charms, I almoſt wiſh
That I could love him.

EDMUND.

Wherefore doth thine eye
Thus meaſure me with apprehenſive ſtrangeneſs?
Thy varying colour ſpeaks ſome ſtrong emotion!
Art thou diſpleas'd, the Dane and I are bound
In union firm? Doſt thou ſuppoſe this heart
Too narrow to admit another friend,
Without rejecting thee? His gen'rous treatment
Of thoſe, whom war ſubjected to his power;
His fearleſs, open, ſoldier-like demeanour,
Whilſt yet my foe, enforc'd my admiration:
But when he ſtak'd our fortunes on the chance
Of ſingle fight, and liberally gave
The Crown I could not win,—he made my heart
His own for ever?

EDRICK.

Doſt thou love him then?

EDMUND.

Aye, can my Brother wonder, that I do?

EDRICK.

To love the Dane,—the fell invading Dane,—
Whoſe ſteps, in Britain, leave the print of blood:
To truſt Canutus, him whoſe deeds avow,
Ambition is his law, may note a temper
Generous and open; but believe me, Sire,
Implies the want of prudence. Canſt thou think
The brittle tie of treaties, or of oaths,
Hold ſouls like his?

EDMUND.

And does not Edrick know,
No injury aggrieves the heart of man
So much as mean ſuſpicion? Let me fall,
And artful treaſon triumph in my ruin,
Rather than merit want my confidence.

EDRICK.

His high-wrought ſoul repels my vain attacks.
But one more trial. Now aſſiſt me, Fraud. [*Aſide.*
Yet was my faith to thee but ill expreſs'd,
Did I conceal the fearful news: Thy Friend,
Thy new-made Friend deceives thee.

EDMUND.

Ha! deceives me?

EDRICK.

Soon as the morning dawns, when his curſt troops
Find entrance in the city, he intends
To give up thee and all that hold thee dear,
Thy Edrick firſt, to certain death. O Edmund!
Awake thy courage; mar the foul deſign:
His few attendants may be ſoon ſurpriz'd,
Juſt victims to our vengeance.

EDMUND.

Heavens! No, Edrick.
To doom th' unheard is infamous. I'll go,
And boldly charge him with his vile intentions.
[*Edmund going.*

EDRICK.

You muſt not.—Hold—'Tis madneſs.

EDMUND.

Should I fear?
The voice of Truth is terrible to guilt.
I ſhall diſcover all. His conſcious eye,
His trembling frame, his bluſhes, will betray him.
But Edrick! if thy envy rais'd this ſlander,
Behold my face no more.

EDRICK.

O Edmund! ſtay—
By all that's ſacred, if thou go'ſt, thoul't die!

EDMUND.

I am determin'd.—Looſe me.——

EDRICK.

Oh! permit
Thy Edrick thus to take his laſt farewell!

EDMUND.

Is it thy laſt? Why hang theſe horrid fears
Round thy diſtracted ſoul?

EDRICK.

I cannot ſtrike. *Aſide.*

EDMUND.

Oh! caſt aſide this peeviſh diſcontent.
My Brother, we ſhall yet have happy days,
When the poſſeſſion of a peaceful Crown
Will be my leaſt felicity.

EDRICK.

The Crown?
Rage! Hell! Ambition give me courage. *Aſide.*
Die! [*Stabs him.*
What fall ſo ſoon? Edmund! O curſed ſteel!
Thou did'ſt the deed too quick. The vital blood
Pours in an ample ſtream. Ah! turn aſide
Thy dying eyes, they are too terrible.
He groans! The torments of the damn'd have ſeiz'd me,
And I am doom'd for everlaſting years
To liſten to thoſe groans! What ſhall I do?
Aſk Heaven for mercy? but how liſt to Heaven
My bloody hands? how bend my ſtubborn heart
To holy meek contrition? Can I pray?
Thou, who alone can'ſt mitigate deſpair,
Forgive!—Oh! no, th' eternal law is rigid.

Blood will have blood, there can be no remiſſion.
The Caſtle conſcious ſhakes. Fall on this head,
Ye rocking battlements, conceal my crimes!
Infernal fiends, what would ye now with Edrick?
Your dire beheſts obeyed, there—there he lies!
Ah! do ye mock me now, and grin around me?
Why proffer me a dagger? What no more?
Takes up the dagger.
Ye promis'd once, a Crown ſhould recompence.
Where would ye drive me? to the gates of Hell?
Horror! Deſpair!—Oh! whither ſhall I fly? *Exit.*

Scene III.

Enter ELGIVA and EMMA attended.

ELGIVA.

Auſpicious day, be thou for ever held
Sacred in Britain! Emma—never more
Shall deſolation ſcourge the ruin'd land,
Or diſcord tear my Edmund from theſe arms.

EMMA.

But my Canutus——

ELGIVA.

He is truly noble:
The Hero ſhines diſtinguiſh'd in each action.
Yet did'ſt thou mark how his attentive eye,
In ſilent admiration, dwelt on Edmund?
And when he gave his plighted hand in ſign—

EMMA.

Good Heavens! what's this? 'tis blood!

ELGIVA.

Ah me! A corſe?
'Tis Edmund!—Oh! my Life, my Love, my Lord!
Help; he will bleed to death. Speak to me, Edmund.
What murd'rous hand hath dar'd this horrid act?
See, how he pants! but manly eloquence
Is dumb for ever. Death's faint icy dew
Hangs on his brow.—He—oh! [*Faints.*

EMMA.

The ſtruggle's o'er:
The ſpirit iſſued, in that doleful groan,
From the majeſtic ruin. Take him, Angels:
Now he is wholly your's; choir him to Heaven,
Nor let our loud laments diſturb your rapture.

Scene IV.

Enter CANUTUS and Attendants.

CANUTUS.

In tears, my Princeſs? what unſeemly ſorrow
Preſumes to violate the ſacred day,
That gives thee to my faithful vows?

EMMA.

Behold!

CANUTUS.

My Friend, why art thou thus?

EMMA.

Bear hence the Queen;
With tender care recall her wand'ring ſenſe.
[*Elgiva is borne off.*
Oh! my Canutus.

CANUTUS.

Would to Heaven, my Crown,
And all my glories, could recall this life!
I'd think it cheaply purchas'd, noble Edmund.
No common grief ſhall mourn ſo great a loſs:
Long as exalted virtue is rever'd,
So long ſhalt thou be wept.

Scene V.

Enter CEFRID.

CEFRID.

Where is my King?

CANUTUS.

There, Cefrid,—dead to all his people's prayers.

CEFRID.

Then all my fears are true.

CANUTUS.

What fears?

CEFRID.

Vile Edrick;
Pale, trembling, ſore confus'd,—but now attempted,

Unſeen, to paſs the poſtern. I obſerv'd him,
And as we parley'd, with amazement, ſaw
His veſture ſtain'd with blood. On further ſearch,
This dagger was diſcover'd.

[*Shewing Edrick's dagger.*

CANUTUS.

Drag him hither. [*Exit Cefrid.*

Much injur'd Edmund, if the recompence
Of all thy virtues was but early death,
What puniſhment ſhall man aſſign thy murd'rer,
Proportion'd to his crimes?

Scene VI.

Enter EDRICK, CEFRID, KENELM, HAROLD, and Lords.

CANUTUS.

Hell-hound! come on.
There turn thine eyes—ſurvey that ghaſtly form—
Bring all his gen'rous actions to thy view.
Think—tremble and deſpair.

EDRICK.

I own the deed.

CANUTUS.

Doſt thou avow it, Villain? Yon bright ſtars
Would hide their lucid beauty, could they hear,
And the firm-ſeated Earth ſhake on its baſe.

When, thou ſhalt viſit for this ſacred blood,
Avenging Heaven, demand it not of Denmark!
My hands abjure the deed,—my heart deteſts it;
And to atone thy wrath, I give to Juſtice
This Son of Darkneſs.

EDRICK.

Can'ſt thou then condemn me?
Thy intereſt urg'd the act. No more ſhall Edmund
Oppoſe thy triumph and obſcure thy fame.
Can'ſt thou enjoy the Crown, yet ſentence me?

CANUTUS.

Plead this excuſe to devils, damn'd as thoſe
That ſteel'd thy boſom.

EDRICK.

I demand thy promiſe.
Lord Harold, thou wer't witneſs; 'twas recorded
With Britiſh blood, your Monarch vow'd to raiſe me
Above an equal.

CANUTUS.

Be that oath performed!
Thou, Harold, ſee my ſolemn will obey'd.
To death let all the mockery of ſcorn
And public ſhame be added: which achiev'd,
Affix his head, on high, above an equal——
A ſtay to wild ambition, and, to times
As yet remote, a terrible example.

EDRICK.

Relent. Oh! muſt I die?—ſo ſoon?

CANUTUS.

Thou muſt,
The pleading ſeraph, Charity, averts
Her bluſhing face, and to ſtern Juſtice yields
A villain ſo abhorr'd.

EDRICK.

Know then, proud King,
A nobler prize than thou can'ſt give,—a Crown—
That Crown, my anceſtors for ages wore,
Taught me, with fearleſs rage, to ruſh on guilt;
To give, at Aſhdown, Britain to thy ſword;
And now turn fratricide. My final purpoſe
The horrors of my troubled ſoul deſtroy'd.
This I avow, on thee I meant to charge
Theſe guilty ſcenes, and, by their Monarch's death,
Incite the hardy Britons to rebel.

EMMA.

Perfidious, treach'rous Monſter!

CANUTUS.

Doſt thou wonder!
I ſtart not at it: The inhuman hand,
That bore a dagger to this Hero's heart,
Would whelm the goodly Univerſe in ruin.
—Lead him to death.

EDRICK.

I go.—Pale, injur'd form!
Once more will I behold thee. O my Brother!
Was this the utmoſt envy could perform?
Honour ſhall guard thy ſacred duſt, and Fame
Produce thy glorious life for imitation.

Me, ſhameful death awaits, (my memory curs'd
By after-ages) and the dire unknown
From which reflection ſtarts! yet all but juſt.
Theſe are thy gifts, Ambition!—Oh! Diſtraction!

Exeunt Edrick, Harold, Guards.

CANUTUS.

Ye friends of Edmund, whoſe expreſſive looks
Speak heartfelt woe, indulge your copious ſorrows!
Denmark will join; Denmark, in ſolemn ſtate,
With tears unfeign'd, will honour Edmund's worth.
Meanwhile, be yours the care, with martial rites,
And each funereal grace which weeping Love
On ſlumb'ring Merit's ſilent grave beſtows,
To ſee your murder'd maſter's corſe interr'd.
Nor fear in me, ye generous Chiefs, to find
A tyrant Conq'ror. Sacred be the vows
I gave your King. The worthy and the brave,
Briton or Dane, alike ſhall claim my care.
The States of Weſſex now ſhall be conven'd,
And fix, by their decree, their future Sovereign.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

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MISCELLANEOUS POETRY:

Written at an early period of Life.

DEDICATED TO

The Right Hon. Lady CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.